

**FINAL**

**BOX ELDER  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT**

**SALT LAKE DISTRICT  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OCTOBER, 1985**





IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SALT LAKE DISTRICT OFFICE

2370 SOUTH 2300 WEST

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84119

(U-230)

Dear Public Land User:

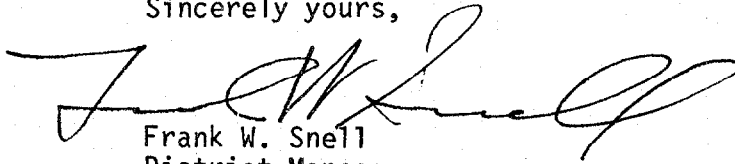
Enclosed is the proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Box Elder Planning Area. The Salt Lake District, Bureau of Land Management has prepared this document in conformance with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

This Proposed RMP and Final EIS are designed to be used in conjunction with the Draft RMP/EIS published in April, 1985. This document contains the proposed plan along with revisions and corrections pertaining to the Draft RMP/EIS, public comments received, and BLM's responses to these comments.

The State Director shall approve the RMP no sooner than 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency has published notice of receipt of the Final EIS in the Federal Register. Persons desiring to protest proposed decisions in this document must submit written protests to the Director, Bureau of Land Management (Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 18 and C Streets, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240) within 30 days of the filing of the document with the Environmental Protection Agency. All protests must be received within the time limit allowed and must conform to the requirements of 43 CFR 1610.5-2. The Final Resource Management Plan will be completed with a Record of Decision.

I want to personally thank those who participated in the development of this plan. I hope your involvement will continue as we move into the implementation and monitoring phases of the plan and develop activity plans in specific programs.

Sincerely yours,



Frank W. Snell  
District Manager

**PROPOSED  
BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
AND  
FINAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Prepared by  
Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Salt Lake District



State Director  
Utah State Office

**Abstract:** This Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, when combined with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, describe and analyze four alternatives for management of public lands and resources in Box Elder County. The proposed plan is patterned after Alternative 2. It focuses on resolving four planning issues but also addresses all resource programs. When the Resource Management Plan becomes final, it will provide a comprehensive management framework for the public lands and resources in Box Elder County.

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Protests on the Final RMP/EIS are due: November 18, 1985.

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## **HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

This document consists of three sections: the Summary, the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP), and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It is intended that this document be used together with the Draft RMP/EIS.

The Summary reviews the development of this document and the previously published Draft RMP/EIS. The Summary also highlights the major actions found in the Proposed RMP portion of this document.

The Proposed RMP includes the decisions which would be required for each resource program. The maps represent the proposed decisions. Any differences between the preferred alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP are noted.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement includes public comments and responses, the environmental consequences of the Proposed RMP, and revisions and corrections of the Draft RMP/EIS.

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# SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The following summary briefly reviews the development of this document and its companion volume, the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The information presented in this document is organized in two sections, the Proposed Resource Management Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of this organization is to focus attention on the management decisions that are being proposed for the planning area. In response to both public comments and internal review, changes have been made and noted between the preferred alternative described in the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP outlined in this document. The environmental consequences of the Proposed RMP are described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement portion of this document.

## ISSUES

Resource management plans deal with all resource programs in a planning area. However, only those aspects of current resource management which are felt to be issues are examined through the formulation and evaluation of alternatives. An issue may be defined as an opportunity, conflict, or problem regarding the use or management of public lands and resources.

Four major issues will be addressed in the Box Elder Resource Management Plan. These issues were identified based on input from the public, BLM resource specialists and managers, and other government agencies.

### ISSUE 1: Land Ownership Adjustments

The Box Elder Planning Area is currently an intermingled, checkerboard pattern of Federal, State, and private lands. This pattern has resulted in resource management problems concerning livestock grazing, watershed, wildlife habitat, off-road vehicles, forest products, and historic/cultural resources (e.g., the old Central Pacific Railroad grade), along with trespass and vandalism. Access difficulties, for both BLM and the public, also occur. Effective on-the-ground improvements may be precluded in some areas because of a lack of public land blocks. Landownership adjustments are needed to achieve more efficient

management for protection and utilization of public resources in the area.

### ISSUE 2: Vegetation Management

Management changes appear to be needed in some areas to improve the condition of the vegetation resource and its relationship to wildlife habitat and livestock forage. Conflicts between livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, watershed, and other uses may be responsible for problems with vegetation. Riparian habitat is considered especially important because of its relationship to watershed protection, water quality, wildlife habitat diversity, and forage production. Protection of crucial wildlife habitat is needed in some areas. Possibilities exist for reintroduction of wildlife into historic range; implications of these reintroductions must be addressed.

### ISSUE 3: Mineral Development

It is BLM's continuing mineral resource policy to "foster and encourage . . . the orderly and economic development of domestic mineral resources."

Opportunities exist within the Box Elder Planning Area to develop these minerals under the principles of balanced, multiple-use management while protecting other resources.

### ISSUE 4: Off-Road Vehicle Use

Off-road vehicle (ORV) use causes conflicts with other resources and uses in portions of the planning area. Wildlife such as mule deer and sage grouse are sometimes harassed by ORV users during crucial periods. ORV use has resulted in the deterioration of existing roads and trails and has created new trails because of cross-country travel. This cross-country use has aggravated the erosion of the watershed in some areas. ORV users have harassed livestock during the critical lambing and calving periods. Trespass and associated damage on private lands is a major concern of the local public. Appropriate levels of motorized use in these conflict areas need to be determined.

## PLANNING CRITERIA

The following criteria have been established to guide the development of the Resource Management Plan.

## SUMMARY

(1) The overall objective of land use planning for the Box Elder Planning Area will be sustained multiple use of the public land.

(2) The RMP will be consistent to the maximum extent with the plans and management programs of local and State governments, consistent with Federal laws and regulations, and coordinated with other Federal agencies.

(3) Participation by the public will be a key factor in decision-making.

(4) Social and economic impacts to local communities resulting from public land management will be considered.

(5) The effect of public land management on neighboring land will be considered.

(6) The planning process will identify those lands which will best serve public needs by being retained in Federal ownership, and those lands which are difficult or uneconomical to manage or would best serve important public objectives by their disposal. All public land tracts in the planning area will be placed in a disposal or retention category.

Types of realty actions will be prioritized according to how well they serve the public and resolve management conflicts. Realty actions which do not serve the public interest or resolve problems will be eliminated from consideration.

Decisions will not be made in the RMP about specific realty cases.

(7) Exploration and development of minerals will continue to be a priority, subject to those measures necessary to adequately protect other values and uses.

(8) A decision will be made for each allotment and will include:

- Allotment boundaries.
- Permittees in the allotment.
- Class of livestock.
- An identification of authorized forage for livestock, wildlife, watershed, or other necessary purposes.
- Season-of-use.

More detailed parts of the grazing program will be made in the allotment management plans.

(9) Adjustments of the grazing preference of permittees will only be made if adequate data exists and demonstrates a need for change. If adequate data does not exist, the decision will

be to monitor. Objectives, types of studies, key species, and other basic components of the monitoring program will be established.

(10) Decisions about specific range, wildlife, or watershed improvements will not be made in the RMP, but rather will be made in the activity plans. Improvements are considered in this plan for environmental impact assessment purposes. The RMP will develop standard requirements for improvements.

(11) Decisions will be made for the designation of:

- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Off-road vehicle use areas.
- Fluid mineral leasing categories.
- Visual Resource Management classes.

(12) The management, use and protection of water sources, water, riparian zones, and other related values will be given a high priority.

## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THE DRAFT RMP/EIS

Four alternatives were considered in detail in the Draft RMP/EIS. Within each alternative, a complete resource management plan which described both issue and non-issue related resource programs was analyzed. The four alternatives are briefly described below.

### Alternative 1

This alternative described the continuation of current management and was identified as the no-action alternative.

### Alternative 2

This alternative provided a balance between resource development and resource protection. Some aspects of this alternative stressed development, such as land disposal, access, and off-road vehicle use, while other aspects stressed protection, such as withdrawing lands from mineral entry and designating Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. This alternative was identified as BLM's preferred alternative in the draft RMP/EIS.

### Alternative 3

This alternative emphasized protection of



## SUMMARY

resources, including wildlife habitat, watershed, visual resources and non-motorized recreation, while allowing compatible resource development activities.

### Alternative 4

This alternative emphasized resource development and protected other resources to the extent required by laws and regulations.

### Public Input

More than 170 public comments in 25 public comment letters were received. In addition, a total of 23 comments were made by four commentors at a public hearing held in Brigham City. Responses to these comments have been formulated and are included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement portion of this document. The comments resulted in several modifications of the Draft RMP/EIS.

## PROPOSED DECISIONS

This RMP includes proposed decisions for each resource program in the Box Elder Planning Area. Proposed decisions for some programs, such as cultural resources and forest resources, would continue the current management. Other proposed decisions, such as off-road vehicle designations, would implement formal designations for the first time. In most other resource programs, proposed decisions represent adjustments or revisions of existing management practices. Summaries of the major proposed decisions follow.

**Lands**—A total of 1,003,477 acres would be retained in public ownership and 8,317 acres would be disposed. Avoidance areas for right-of-ways would be established to protect sensitive resource values.

**Minerals**—The current mineral withdrawal of 6,840 acres would continue. An additional 381 acres near Donner and Bettridge Creeks would be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry.

Revised fluid mineral leasing categories would be applied to the planning area as follows:

Open with Standard Stipulations	800,732 acres
Open with Special Stipulations	213,726 acres
Open with No Surface Occupancy	3,861 acres
Closed to Leasing	0 acres

Applications for removal of other leasable materials or common variety mineral materials would continue to be handled on a case-by-

case basis.

**Range**—Initial forage use by livestock would be as follows:

Cattle	29,850 AUMs
Sheep	15,539 AUMs
Domestic Horses	315 AUMs

Allotments would continue to be monitored so that proper stocking levels can be established. Specific rangeland improvement projects to meet resource objectives would be determined through the development of Allotment Management Plans (AMPs).

Roads (8 miles) will be constructed to provide access to Baker Hill and the southeast portion of Dove Creek Allotments.

**Air, Soils and Watershed**—BLM would continue to evaluate these resources on a case-by-case basis and ensure that they are maintained or improved. Water rights for water use on public land will be acquired and protected. Water quality will be monitored in selected areas. Measures for meeting objectives for maintaining or improving the overall watershed quality would be initiated. Measures for meeting objectives for riparian areas would be initiated.

**Wildlife Habitat**—BLM would cooperate with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) in reintroductions of bighorn sheep in the Pilot and Newfoundland Mountains and pronghorn in the old sheep trail area. BLM would not agree to a reintroduction of elk in the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountains. Mule deer use would continue at current levels. Stipulations would be established to protect sensitive wildlife values from surface disturbing activities. Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) would be prepared for six important wildlife areas. Initial forage use for big game species would be as follows:

Mule deer	15,570 AUMs
Elk	344 AUMs
Pronghorn	1,586 AUMs
Bighorn sheep	248 AUMs

**Recreation**—Off-road vehicle (ORV) designations would be applied to public lands in Box Elder County as follows:

Open	999,634 acres
Limited	12,160 acres
Closed	0 acres

## SUMMARY

**Visual Resources**—Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes would be established and applied to public lands as follows:

VRM Class I	0 acres
VRM Class II	10,930 acres
VRM Class III	73,581 acres
VRM Class IV	927,283 acres

**Cultural Resources**—Cultural resources would continue to be evaluated and protected on a case-by-case basis.

**Forest Resources**—Forest resources on public lands would continue to be managed under the 1984 Bear River Resource Area Forestry Management Plan until 1987, when the plan will be revised or updated as needed.

**Fire Management**—A fire suppression plan would be developed and would include full and limited suppression areas along with prescribed fire areas.

**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**—Approximately 1120 acres of public land along Donner and Bettridge Creeks and 250 acres along the Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade would be designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

### Plan Implementation and Monitoring

The Proposed RMP presented in this document would be implemented over a period of years. The ability of the Salt Lake District to complete the identified projects is directly dependent upon available funding. The priorities for accomplishment will be reviewed annually and may be revised based on changes in law, regulations, policy, or economic factors. A monitoring system will be developed to determine the effectiveness of the proposed decisions and the need for future modification.

# **PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This plan contains the proposed decisions for management of public lands in Box Elder County. Changes between the preferred alternative of the Draft RMP and the proposed plan are noted. A rationale for each proposed decision is also provided. The plan does not contain information on environmental consequences. This information is found in the second portion of this document, the Final EIS.

## **LANDS PROGRAM**

### **Proposed Decision 1**

Retain a total of 1,003,477 acres of public land as defined by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 in Federal ownership. This public land will be retained except for two specific kinds of actions: (1) exchanges and (2) conveyances under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926 as amended (43 U.S.C. 869 et seq.).

Proposals for land exchanges shall meet one or more of the following criteria with a higher priority given to those proposals with the greatest net gain in public values:

(1) Acquire areas that have common property lines, not corners, with existing public land, and that increase the efficiency of public land management. The cumulative total of adjoining public lands that would result after acquisition must be at least 1,920 acres.

(2) Acquire areas where there is a net gain of the following values:

- Riparian and aquatic habitat including springs, streams and marshes.
- Public lands within or adjacent to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Visual Resource Management Classes II and III areas.

(3) Dispose of areas with serious unauthorized use and boundary dispute problems, if every reasonable attempt under existing law has been made to resolve the problem without a suitable solution and the lands are not needed for any important resource value.

## **Rationale**

Congress has declared that it is the policy of the United States to retain public land in Federal ownership unless as a result of the planning process a disposal is determined to be in the national interest.

It has been determined through the inventory and land use planning process that these 1,003,477 acres contain significant multiple use values as defined in FLPMA, including but not limited to:

- livestock grazing, including the stabilization and development of the livestock industry dependent upon Federal lands;
- fish and wildlife development and utilization, including the maintenance of habitat and food supplies for the fish and wildlife dependent upon the public lands and maintained under Federal and State programs;
- mineral production, such as through material sales, free use permits, and mineral leases;
- outdoor recreation, including the provision or preservation of adequate areas of public hunting and fishing grounds, the provision of needed conservation of recreation areas, scenic areas, natural beauty, open space, and public access thereto;
- watershed protection, including the protection of frail lands, conservation of productive soils and water supplies, and prevention of damage and loss due to excessive runoff, flooding, and siltation;
- woodland product production; and
- archaeological, historic, and scientific resource protection and management.

The retention of these public lands and their resource values are needed to meet the present and future needs of the American people, and to achieve the maximum future use taking into account the long-term needs for renewable and nonrenewable resources. The decision is based on a consideration of the relative values of the

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

resources and not necessarily on the use that will give the greatest economic return or the greatest unit output.

The requirement to achieve a minimum disturbance of existing users is met.

The majority of the lands in Box Elder County is private, and generally devoted to single uses or other more limited uses than on public land. The decision to retain this public land is based on the relative scarcity of the values involved and the availability of alternative means and sites for realization of these values.

The lands are needed to protect or enhance Federal programs, by such means as the control of access, exclusion of non-conforming inholdings, and maintenance of efficient management areas.

These lands do not meet the criteria for disposal required by the law and regulations.

The land ownership pattern in the Box Elder Planning Area is very complex as a result of the historic disposal action. This ownership pattern results in difficult, ineffective management of both the public and private lands. Exchanges would allow the readjustment of ownership patterns without a net loss of Federal ownership or natural resource values if they are allowed under the criteria listed above. As a general rule, exchanges wherein the acreage acquired would not result in a continuous block of at least 1,920 acres of public land would not be allowed. Significant improvement of public land management rarely results from exchanges resulting in less than 1,920 acres of continuous public land.

This proposed decision differs from the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP/EIS in that it omits the exchange criteria related to wildlife habitat, watersheds, areas with higher than average forage production potential, areas where BLM has made on-the-ground investments, and the Pilot Mountains. Although these areas contain important public values and will continue to be considered in exchange proposals, it was felt that the values and/or areas described are too broad and all encompassing to be used effectively as criteria for accepting or rejecting a proposal. Areas in Visual Resource Management Class III were added because it was felt that the public values within these areas were significant enough to serve as a criterion for accepting or rejecting an exchange proposal. The remaining criteria, as stated in the proposed decision, represent

overwhelming public values that would be determining factors in each exchange proposal.

### Proposed Decision 2

The following tracts of public land (see Table 1 and Figure 1) will be disposed: Tracts 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41. They will be disposed of by any appropriate method under the law.

Tracts 5, 6, 7, and 25 will be transferred to the adjoining Federal agency. If that agency indicates in writing that it does not wish to acquire the tract(s) or refuses to take the appropriate steps necessary to begin the acquisition of the tracts within 2 years of the agency being notified of the effective date of this plan, the tracts will be disposed of by any appropriate method under applicable laws.

Tracts 33, 34, 35 and 40 will be transferred to the adjoining Federal agency. If that agency indicates in writing that it does not wish to acquire the tract(s) or refuses to take the appropriate steps necessary to begin the acquisition of the tracts they will be retained under BLM administration. All of the above tracts total 8,317 acres. They are listed in Table 1 and shown on Figure 1.

### Rationale

In Section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Congress has allowed the disposal of public land when such tract, because of its location or other characteristics, is difficult and uneconomical to manage as part of the public lands and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency. The tracts listed for disposal in this decision clearly fit these criteria. Two tracts (14 and 32) were added to the list of tracts proposed for disposal in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP/EIS. These tracts were added to the disposal category due to public request, potential difficulties in negotiating an exchange, and the isolation and unmanageability of these areas. Five tracts (16, 20, 21, 22, 41) originally considered for disposal in Alternative Four of the Draft RMP/EIS have been added for similar reasons. No significant environmental consequences would result if any or all of the above tracts were disposed. Tracts that may be suitable for management by

# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

TABLE 1

Tracts Proposed for Disposal or Transfer

Tract Number	Tract Location	Acres
1.	T. 6N., R. 5W., Sec. 6: S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 7: Lots 1, 2, 5, 6 & 7 NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0 580.62
2.	T. 6N., R. 6W., Sec. 12: Lots 1-4	94.8
3.	T. 8N., R. 2W., Sec. 15: Lot 8	1.85
4.	T. 8N., R. 7W., Sec. 8: Lots 1 & 2, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	137.96
5.	T. 9N., R. 4W., Sec. 11: Lots 3 & 4	19.0
6.	Sec. 35: Lot 6	2.79
7.	T. 9N., R. 5W., Sec. 6: Lots 1-12, SE $\frac{1}{4}$	609.58
8.	T. 10N., R. 2W., Sec. 29: Lot 7	.50
9.	T. 11N., R. 5W., Sec. 12: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	40.00
10.	T. 11N., R. 6W., Sec. 14: S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
11.	T. 11N., R. 7W., Sec. 26: E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
12.	T. 11N., R. 18W., Sec. 20: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	240.0
13.	T. 12N., R. 4W., Sec. 6: Lots 2, 3, & 10	49.5
14.	T. 12N., R. 9W., Sec. 14: All Sec. 15: All Sec. 22: All	640.0 640.0 640.0



# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 1, Continued

Tract Number	Tract Location	Acres
15.	T. 12N., R. 14W., Sec. 3: E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
16.	T. 12N., R. 17W., Sec. 34: W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
17.	T. 13N., R. 2W., Sec. 26: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	40.0
18.	E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	120.0
19.	T. 13N., R. 8W., Sec. 12: All	640.0
20.	T. 13N., R. 13W., Sec. 12: E $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$	160.0
21.	Sec. 14: W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
22.	T. 13N., R. 14W., Sec. 2: W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$	86.43
23.	T. 13N., R. 15W., Sec. 13: Lots 11, 12	3.43
24.	T. 13N., R. 18W., Sec. 8: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	40.0
25.	T. 14N., R. 3W., Sec. 3: Lots 1 & 7	77.21
26.	T. 14N., R. 4W., Sec. 6: Lot 4	30.45
27.	Sec. 12: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	40.0
28.	T. 14N., R. 5W., Sec. 34: E $\frac{1}{2}$	320.0
29.	T. 14N., R. 7W., Sec. 20: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
30.	T. 14N., R. 8W., Sec. 26, Lots 1-7, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	295.31
31.	T. 14N., R. 9W., Sec. 12: S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	80.0
32.	T. 14N. R. 11W., Sec. 14: W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 15: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 22: NE $\frac{1}{4}$	120.0 160.0 160.0

# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 1, Continued

Tract Number	Tract Location	Acres
33.	T. 14N., R. 14W., Sec. 1: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	40.0
34.	T. 14N., R. 15W., Sec. 22: S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	320.01
35.	Sec. 23: Lots 3, 4, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	175.31
36.	T. 15N., R. 4W., Sec. 25: Lots 1-4 Sec. 26: Lots 1-4 Sec. 27: Lots 1-4 Sec. 28: Lots 1-4 Sec. 29: Lots 1-4 Sec. 33: N $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 34: NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	13.5 12.72 15.34 18.36 17.74 320.0 280.0
37.	T. 15N., R. 6W., Sec. 25: Lots 1-4	8.26
38.	Sec. 31: Lots 8-16 <sup>1</sup>	100.85
39.	T. 15N., R. 11W., Sec. 30: Lots 1-4	163.39
40.	T. 15N., R. 14W., Sec. 27: Lots 1-4 Sec. 28: Lots 1-4	42.71 79.22
41.	T. 14N., R. 15W., Sec. 15: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 22: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	40.00 40.00
TOTAL		8,316.83

<sup>1</sup>Section is currently being resurveyed. Description and acreage are preliminary and may vary slightly depending on results of final survey.

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

another Federal agency and otherwise meet the disposal criteria have been separately identified and will be disposed of only after the adjoining Federal agency has indicated a lack of interest in them. Tracts that may be suitable for management by another Federal agency but otherwise do not meet the disposal criteria will be retained by BLM if the adjoining Federal agency is not interested in acquiring them. Two tracts (35, 36) were considered disposal tracts in Alternative Four of the Draft RMP/EIS, but because they are adjacent to National Forest land they should be considered for transfer to the Forest Service.

### Proposed Decision 3

The utilization of rights-of-way in common shall be considered whenever possible. Rights-of-way will, to the maximum extent possible, avoid the following areas:

- (1) lands within 0.5 mile of sage grouse strutting grounds if the disturbance would adversely impact the effectiveness of the lek.
- (2) lands within 600 feet of riparian/aquatic habitats.
- (3) lands within VRM Class II and III areas.
- (4) lands where an above-ground right-of-way would be an obvious visual or physical intrusion such as ridge tops or narrow drainages.
- (5) lands with slopes greater than 30 percent.

Exceptions may be permitted based on considerations of the following criteria:

- type and need for facility proposed and economic impact of facility,
- conflicts with other resource values and uses, and
- availability of alternative routes and/or mitigation measures.

Note: See also seasonal restrictions described in Proposed Wildlife Decision 7.

### Rationale

Section 503 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 states, "In order to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way, the utilization of rights-of-way in common shall be required to the extent practical . . ."

BLM's intention is to make every reasonable effort when considering right-of-way proposals

to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and to meet the needs of the local populace.

This proposed decision differs from the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS. Slopes over 30 percent were added as avoidance areas because it was felt that they would typically be adversely impacted by rights-of-way proposals. VRM Class III areas were thought to have special public values that should be considered and were therefore added as avoidance areas. The criteria of 100 yards adjacent to riparian/aquatic habitats was changed to 600 feet to make this restriction consistent with those for mineral activities. The area within 100 yards of live waters was eliminated as an avoidance area criterion because the stipulation regarding riparian/aquatic areas would include all live waters.

### Proposed Decision 4

Legal and physical access needs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the access to be obtained, the priority in meeting management objectives, and the availability of sufficient funding.

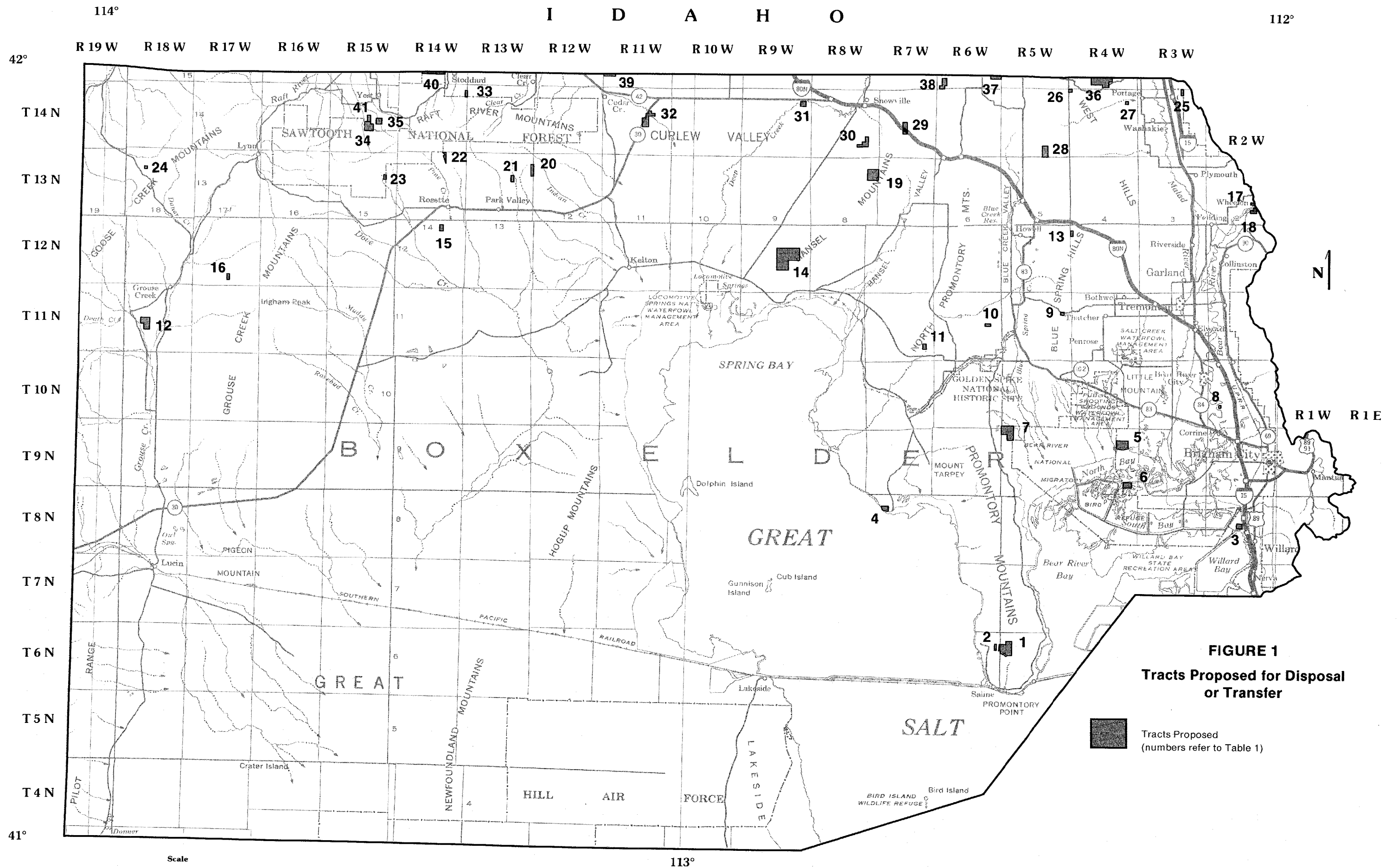
### Rationale

Specific access needs will undoubtedly be identified as various resource planning decisions are implemented and land patterns change. BLM's current policy of evaluating access on a case-by-case basis is the most effective way to handle these future needs. Although easements were identified for acquisition in the preferred alternative, public comments and BLM's reevaluation of the proposals and alternatives indicated that a need for this legal access does not presently exist.

## MINERALS PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Continue to process applications for the removal of common variety mineral materials including sand and gravel and leasable minerals other than fluid minerals on a case-by-case basis. Stipulations to protect important surface values will be required based on interdisciplinary review of each proposal.



# **BOX ELDER PLANNING AREA**

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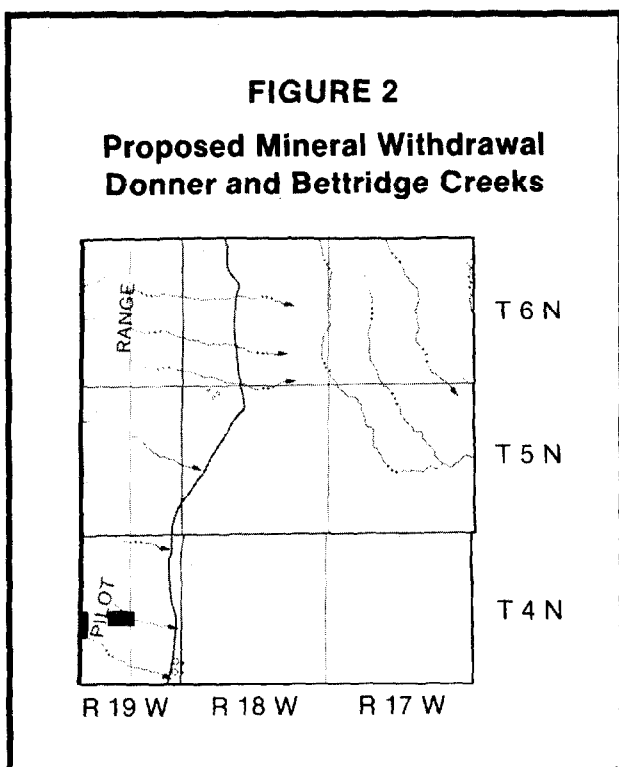
# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Rationale

This is BLM's current policy for managing leasable minerals other than fluid minerals and common variety minerals in Box Elder County and was part of the Features Common to All Alternatives section in the Draft RMP/EIS.

## Proposed Decision 2

Prepare an application to withdraw from mineral entry under the mining law approximately 381 public land acres underlain with Federal minerals in Donner and Bettridge Creek drainages. The purpose of the withdrawal would be to protect the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a threatened species. The withdrawn area would include T. 4N., R. 19W., Section 20, Lots 1, 2, 3 and 4 (61 acres) and Section 22 (320 acres). The proposed withdrawal is shown in Figure 2.



Continue the withdrawal U-52338 (Interpretation Withdrawal Public Water Reserve 107) which limits mineral entry on 6,840 acres (see legal descriptions in Appendix 1) for protection of water sources.

The remainder of the planning area would remain open for locatable mineral entry.

## Rationale

Bettridge Creek and Donner Creek are a unique combination of rare and/or fragile resources on the Pilot Mountains in western Box Elder County. Some recent studies by a BLM fisheries biologist identified that one of the last pure strains of Lahontan cutthroat trout exists in these streams. This trout is a threatened species; a decision to protect their habitat from disturbance is consistent with BLM policy and law. The acreage differs from the acreage listed in the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS because a portion of the Federal surface previously included was found not be underlain with Federal minerals.

Water is a precious commodity in Utah as well as most western states. Proper management of this resource is a crucial element in the multiple use management concept developed in Box Elder County. The decision to continue withdrawal U-52338 protects this precious commodity.

The majority of public lands and mineral estate in the planning area would remain open to mineral entry, which is consistent with current executive orders and Federal regulations.

## Proposed Decision 3

Categorize the Federal mineral estate in Box Elder County for fluid mineral leasing in the least restrictive category which will adequately protect other resources and land uses. Lands would be placed in categories as follows (also see Figure 3):

Category 1: Open for leasing	800,732 acres
Category 2: Open with special stipulations	213,726 acres

The special stipulations are:

(1) In order to protect crucial mule deer winter range, exploration, drilling and other development activity will be allowed only from April 16 to November 30 and not allowed from December 1 to April 15. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 83,840 acres. If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer in consultation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

(2) In order to protect crucial raptor nesting sites, exploration, drilling and other development activity within 0.5 mile radius of the sites will be allowed from July 16 to February 28, and not allowed from March 1 through July 15. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 17,920 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer in consultation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

(3) In order to protect crucial sage grouse breeding complexes, exploration, drilling and other development activity within 0.5 mile radius of the complexes will be allowed from June 16 to March 14 and not allowed from March 15 through June 15. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 23,680 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer in consultation with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

(4) In order to protect visual resources in VRM Class II and III areas, activities in these areas will be located and designed in a way to meet Class II and III management criteria. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 84,511 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer.

(5) In order to protect crucial riparian habitat and municipal and non-municipal watershed areas, no occupancy or other surface disturbance will be allowed within 600 feet of live water. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 3,535 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this

stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer.

(6) In order to protect crucial watershed areas, no occupancy or other surface disturbance will be allowed on slopes in excess of 30 percent. This limitation does not apply to maintenance and operation of producing wells. This stipulation affects 149,715 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer.

Category 3: No Surface  
Occupancy 3,861 acres

The following stipulations will be applied to areas which will be leased but where no surface occupancy will be permitted:

(1) All or part of the land in this lease is included in a critical area for a threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Therefore, no occupancy or disturbance of the surface of the land is authorized. This stipulation affects 381 acres in Donner and Bettridge Creeks which contain Lahontan cutthroat trout.

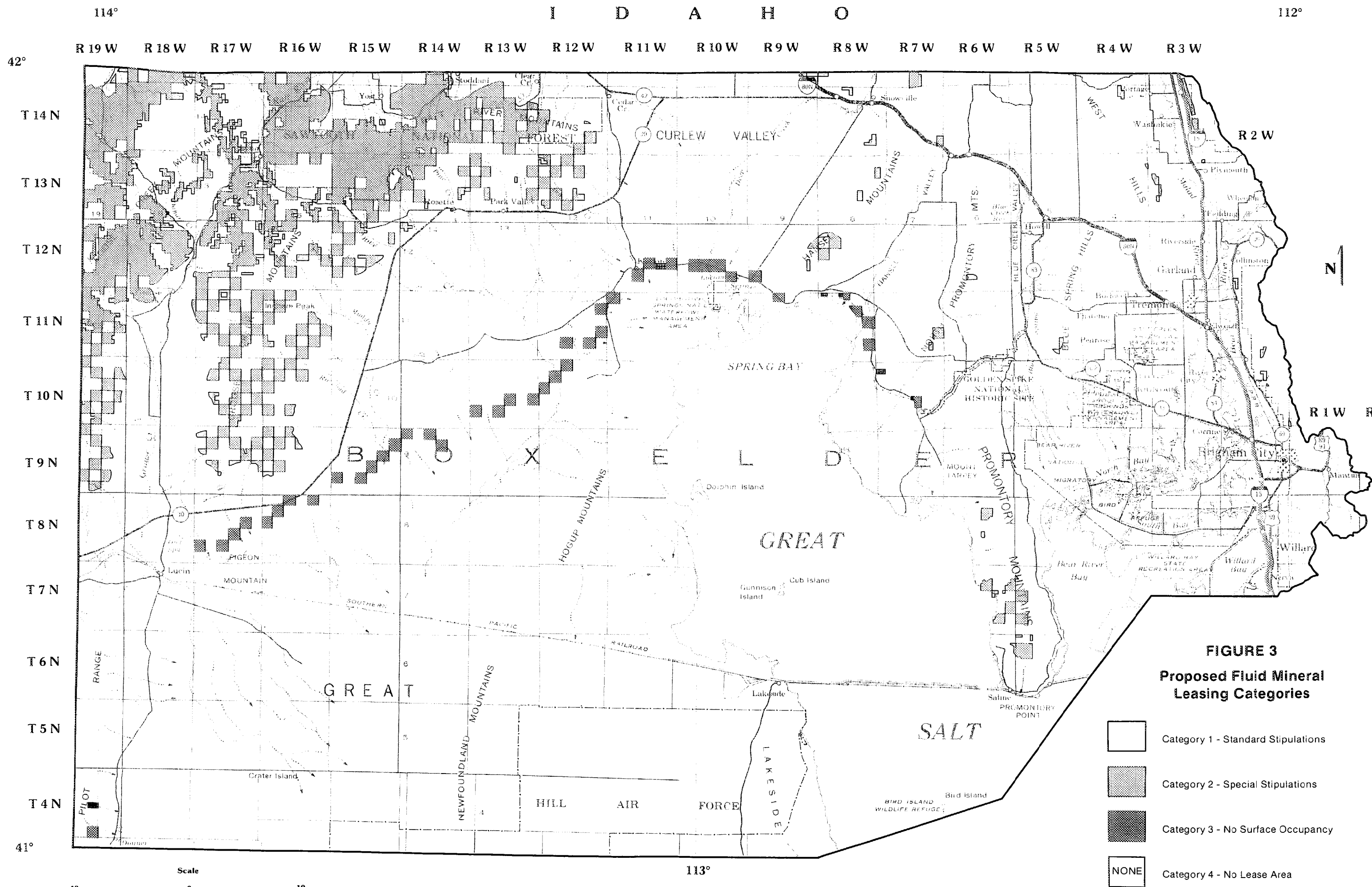
If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(2) All or part of the land in this lease is included in the Golden Spike National Historic Site. Therefore, no occupancy or disturbance of the surface of the land is authorized. This stipulation affects the Golden Spike National Historic Site which encompasses 2,240 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer with concurrence of the National Park Service.

(3) All or part of the land in this lease is included in a significant historical site. Therefore, no occupancy or disturbance of the surface of the land is authorized. This stipulation affects the old Central Pacific Railroad grade which encompasses 1,240 acres.

If the lessee can demonstrate that operations can take place without impact to the resource being protected, an exemption to this



# BOX ELDER PLANNING AREA

NOTE: This map meets the National Map Accuracy Standards

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## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

stipulation may be granted, if approved in writing by the authorized officer with concurrence of the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Category 4: Closed to Leasing 0 Acres

### Rationale

To be consistent with the national energy policy, the Box Elder Planning Area was categorized so that the Federal mineral estate in the area will be in the least restrictive category which would adequately protect the resources. Areas containing the most valuable, rare, and/or unique resource values within the planning area were placed in more restrictive categories, where conflicts could be mitigated using special stipulations and/or allowing no surface occupancy.

These proposed decisions differ from the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP. Riparian areas and municipal/non-municipal watershed in Category 2 increased from 395 to 3,535 acres because a 600-foot buffer zone was added to bring the decision into compliance with District policy. The radius around sage grouse strutting grounds was changed from 2 miles in the Preferred Alternative to 0.5 mile in this Proposed Decision because 0.5 mile would adequately protect the areas. Devil's Playground was changed from Category 3 to Category 2 in which the appropriate stipulation for protection of visual resources could be applied. The acreages and areas in VRM Class II and III were increased due to a re-inventory of visual resources in the county (see Visual Resource Management Program Proposed Decision 1). The acreage of Donner and Bettridge Creeks in Category 3 decreased from 980 to 381 acres due to a deletion of non-federal mineral lands in the area.

## RANGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Categorize the grazing allotments as shown in Table 2 based on present resource conditions and the potential for improvement. The Category M (Maintain) allotments will generally be managed to maintain current satisfactory range conditions. Category I (Improve) allotments will be managed to resolve conflicts and improve resource conditions. Current management will continue on Category C

(Custodial) allotments to prevent resource deterioration.

### Rationale

BLM's policy for rangeland management is to categorize allotments to help focus management attention on those areas with the greatest management problems and the greatest potential for improved productivity.

Management appears to be satisfactory on 22 allotments in Category M. These allotments are producing forage at or near production potential. Production potential in Category M allotments must be moderate to high. Range condition is satisfactory, and no resource or use conflicts exist.

Management appears to be unsatisfactory on 16 allotments in Category I. These allotments are currently producing forage below their moderate to high potential. Present range condition is generally unsatisfactory and significant resource or use conflicts exist.

Due to land ownership pattern, topography, production potential, or location, intensive management of the Federal land is not practical on 20 allotments in Category C. Limited resource or use conflicts exist on these allotments.

### Proposed Decision 2

Prepare allotment management plans for all Category I and three Category M allotments as shown in Table 2.

The objective of Category I AMPs would be to resolve resource or use conflicts through implementation of rangeland improvement projects or other management procedures such as season-of-use adjustments, increases and decreases in livestock numbers, and grazing systems. All rangeland improvements would be subject to BLM's specifications and stipulations.

The objective of Category M AMPs would be to formally document the current management, which is felt to be satisfactory.

Development of AMPs will consider all other resources and uses. Future levels of funding and manpower may require some adjustments in the timely development of AMPs.



TABLE 2  
ALLOTMENT CATEGORIZATION AND AMP DEVELOPMENT

IMPROVE (I) CATEGORY			MAINTAIN (M) CATEGORY (4)			CUSTODIAL (C) CATEGORY (9)
ALLOTMENT NAME	AMP PRIORITY(1)	AMP COMPLETION DATE	ALLOTMENT NAME	AMP PRIORITY	AMP COMPLETION DATE	ALLOTMENT NAME
Goose Creek	1	March 31, 1987 (2)	Vipont	8		Death Creek
Raft River	2	December 31, 1987	Yost Pasture(5)	2	Dec. 31, 1987	Muddy Creek (7)
Janey Spring	8	March 31, 1991	Junction Creek			Dairy Valley
Hardesty Creek	6	March 31, 1990	Lynn (6)			Rosebud (7)
Grouse Creek	3	March 31, 1988	Buckskin (6)	3	March 31, 1988	Kilgore
Dry Canyon	7	March 31, 1990	Red Butte (6)	3	March 31, 1988	Watercress (7)
Kimball Creek	9	December 31, 1992	Ingham (7)	3	March 31, 1988	Yost Isolated
Cycle Springs	4	February 28, 1989	Ingham Pass			Leppe (7)
Pine Creek	10	March 20, 1991	White Lakes			Rosette (7)
Lucin/Pilot	5	March 31, 1988	Owl Springs			Hirschi
Warm Springs	4	February 28, 1989	U & I			Shaw Springs
Terrace (3)			Newfoundland			Fisher Creek
Basin L&L	2	December 15, 1986	Young Bros			Ten Mile
Dove Creek	1	September 30, 1986	Ward			Curlew Junction
Baker Hills	4	November 1, 1987	Mann			Salt Wells
North Kelton	3	September 30, 1987	Matlin			Rozelle Flats
			Red Dome			Golden Spike
			Selman			Conner
			Peplin			Ida-Ute
			Black Rock			Naf
			South Kelton(8)			
			Snowville	5	September 30, 1988	

- (1) AMP priorities have been set for the Grouse Creek and Park Valley areas. Therefore, there are two number 1 priorities, two number 2 priorities, etc. Priorities with the same number will be done concurrently.
- (2) The AMP for this allotment will be incorporated into a Multiple Use Management Plan.
- (3) The boundary dispute in this allotment will be solved by the implementation of the Dove Creek AMP. When the AMP is signed, the remainder of this allotment not incorporated into the Dove Creek Allotment will change to the Maintain category.
- (4) AMPs in this category are not planned at this time, except as noted. If funding becomes available in the future, these allotments will be put into AMPs by priority.
- (5) The Raft River Allotment when incorporated with Yost Pasture will also be incorporated into the existing AMP.
- (6) The Red Butte/Pine Creek Allotments will be incorporated into the Ingham Allotment AMP. The Buckskin Allotment will be incorporated with the Grouse Creek Allotment AMP.
- (7) These allotments will come under AMPs as follows: Muddy Creek, Rosebud, and Watercress Allotments will be combined with Cycle Springs, Ingham Pass, and Warm Springs Allotments into one allotment. Leppe Allotment will be combined with the Lucin Pilot and the Rosette will become part of the Dove Creek Allotment. After incorporation, the Custodial allotments will assume the category of the principal allotment.
- (8) In the time period between the initial tentative categorization of allotments and the preparation of the Proposed RMP it has been determined that the category of this allotment should be changed from Improve to Maintain. Range improvements accomplished in Fiscal Year 1985 have eliminated most resource conflicts.
- (9) It is doubtful that AMPs will be developed for these allotments, except as noted in (5), unless funding becomes available.

# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Rationale

AMPs are the specific activity plans which allow for detailed evaluation and management actions within an allotment. These activity plans will be developed on all allotments where resource conditions and potential justify the need for the plan. Specifically, they will be developed on all Category I allotments and high priority Category M allotments. Category C and low priority Category M allotments will not have AMPs developed at this time.

## Proposed Decision 3

Implement allotment consolidations as shown in Table 3. Divide Rosebud Allotment in half. Half will be a new allotment; half will be added to Ingham Pass, Muddy Creek, Warm Springs, Cycle Springs, and Watercress Allotments. These allotments will form a new, large allotment which has not yet been named. Divide the combined Leppe and Lucin-Pilot Allotment into Lucin and Pilot Allotments.

**TABLE 3**  
**Allotment Consolidations**

COMBINED ALLOTMENTS	NEW ALLOTMENT NAME
Rosette, Dove Creek	Dove Creek
Red Dome, Matlin	Matlin
Red Butte, Pine Creek	Red Butte
Leppe, Lucin-Pilot	Lucin and Pilot
Raft River, Yost Pasture	Yost Pasture
Water Cress, Rosebud,	Not Yet Named
Ingham Pass, Muddy Creek,	
Warm Spring, Cycle Spring	

## Rationale

Consolidation of two or more allotments:

- facilitates the development of AMPs and grazing systems,
- facilitates the movement of livestock through a grazing system,
- in most cases, allows management flexibility,
- results in administrative efficiency (i.e. billing, use-supervision), and
- reduces costs for the permittees and BLM.

All of the allotments are geographically homogeneous. Generally, the permittees in one allotment are the same as those in the

assimilating allotment. The proposed consolidations are administratively logical and offer the opportunity for increased management efficiency with a minimum of investment. In all cases, the resulting allotment will be classified in Category I.

Following the publication of the Draft RMP/EIS, additional allotments which could benefit from consolidation were identified. Therefore, the consolidations shown in Table 3 include several additions to those identified in the Preferred Alternative.

Division of Rosebud Allotment will result in improved range conditions for the following reasons:

- (1) The Conrad Maxfield portion of the Rosebud Allotment will be part of the Allotment Management Plan for the new combined allotment.
- (2) The Lynn James and Lee Pritchett portion will be used in conjunction with private lands.
- (3) The division will result in the opportunity to design and implement grazing systems which will enhance the range resource, aid in distribution of livestock, and increase the efficiency of forage utilization.

The Lucin/Pilot Allotment is the largest allotment in the planning area. The topography is such that all major vegetative sites can be found within the allotment boundary. As a result, the allotment is both underutilized and overutilized in areas due to poor distribution. In addition, areas that should be grazed during the winter months are being grazed during the summer. It is felt that dividing the allotment would facilitate development of pasture systems in the resulting allotments as well as solve conflicts among permittees.

## Proposed Decision 4

Authorize the following initial forage use in the Box Elder Planning Area:

Cattle	29,850 AUMs
Sheep	15,539 AUMs
Domestic Horses	315 AUMs

The initial forage use is the current active preference level. Appendix 2 lists initial authorized use by allotment.

BLM will continue to monitor the allotments to assure that these levels are proper or determine if adjustments from active preference are needed.

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

On allotments with suspended non-use AUMs (i.e., active preference is below total preference), the suspended AUMs may be reinstated on a temporary, non-renewable basis to the level which current monitoring studies indicate. This temporary non-renewable reinstatement of suspended AUMs may be made permanent after being substantiated by a minimum of 5 years of monitoring data.

On Red Dome and Matlin Allotments, BLM will issue a temporary 60-percent increase in three increments of 20 percent each. The increase would be in the form of temporary, non-renewable AUMs and would be issued in the first, third, and fifth years of a 5-year period. If monitoring data support the increase, the increase would be made permanent.

On Peplin Allotment, BLM will grant a temporary, non-renewable increase of 10 percent (28 AUMs) in earlier livestock turn-out time or numbers of animals for 5 years. If 5 years of monitoring data support the increase, it would be made permanent.

After range improvements are accomplished, additional AUMs could be granted in some allotments. The AUMs would be granted on a temporary, non-renewable basis until monitoring data substantiate a permanent adjustment.

### Rationale

BLM has conducted a soil and vegetative inventory as well as livestock utilization and actual use studies in the planning area. Trend studies have been established; the initial data will be available this year with several collection periods to follow. The above mentioned information along with personal observations generally indicate that authorized livestock grazing preference is proper. Monitoring studies will be conducted to assure that the levels are proper or determine if adjustments from active preference are needed.

Reinstatement of suspended non-use AUMs on a temporary basis is practical in some allotments due to an observed increase in availability of livestock forage. This increase in forage is the result of successful fire rehabilitation seedings and other range improvements such as water systems. These improvements have aided in overall distribution, which in turn has resulted in more uniform utilization. Additional studies will provide the necessary data for BLM to determine if active

preference should be increased on these allotments.

Evidence exists that not all public land in Red Dome and Matlin Allotments was adjudicated for forage during the 1967 adjudication process. In addition, utilization studies since 1979 indicate that average utilization has been 25 to 28 percent with actual livestock use at 90 percent of preference.

On Peplin Allotment, actual use at 98 percent of preference has resulted in an average 23 percent utilization over the last 4 years. Peplin Allotment is in primarily late seral condition.

### Proposed Decision 5

Maintain the current livestock seasons-of-use on 33 allotments. Change the current seasons-of-use on 25 allotments as shown in Table 4 to better meet the requirements of key species.

### Rationale

On 25 allotments the season-of-use will be changed to prevent or reduce further physiological damage to the range resource. In 17 of these allotments, the season-of-use will not change until an AMP is developed and implemented. In the remaining seven allotments, the season-of-use will change following the criteria as noted in Table 4. Season-of-use changes will facilitate the implementation of grazing systems, which will further maintain or improve the vegetative resource.

The following allotments were identified for season-of-use changes in the draft RMP/EIS but will remain as presently authorized: Death Creek, Dairy Valley, and Hirschi. After reevaluation by District personnel, it was determined that the current season-of-use should continue. The changes previously identified would not significantly improve the vegetative resource or management of the allotments.

Table 4

## Proposed Season-of-Use Changes

<u>ALLOTMENT</u>	<u>CLASS</u>	<u>CURRENT SEASON OF USE</u>	<u>PROPOSED SEASON OF USE</u>
Goose Creek	Cattle	04/01-12/31 (6)	(1)
Junction Creek	Cattle	05/01-05/31 11/01-11/30	(1) (1)
Raft River	Cattle	03/16-04/15	04/16-05/15 (2)
Janey Spring	Cattle	05/10-06/25	(1)
Hardesty Creek	Cattle Horses	04/16-12/15 (6) 05/01-10/15	(1) (1)
Grouse Creek	Cattle Horses	05/01-10/15 05/01-10/15	05/15-10/15 05/15-10/15
Dry Canyon	Cattle Horses	05/01-10/15 05/01-10/15	(1) (1)
Kimball Creek	Cattle Horses	05/16-09/30 05/01-09/30	06/01-09/30 (3) 06/01-09/30 (3)
Buckskin	Cattle Horses Cattle Horses	04/01-04/30 04/01-04/30 11/01-11/30 11/01-11/30	(1) (1) (1) (1)
Red Butte	Cattle Horses Cattle Horses	04/01-04/30 04/01-04/30 11/01-11/30 11/01-11/30	(1) (1) (1) (1)
Ingham	Cattle	05/01-09/15	06/01-09/30 (4)
Muddy Creek	Cattle	07/01-09/30	(1)
Ingham Pass	Cattle	08/11-10/10	(1)
Cycle Springs	Cattle	06/01-08/10	(1)
Rosebud	Cattle Sheep	02/16-12/15 (6) 04/11-04/27 12/03-12/23	(1) (1) (1)
Watercress	Cattle	12/16-04/15	(1)
Pine Creek	Cattle Horses Cattle Horses	05/01-05/15 05/01-05/15 10/01-10/15 10/01/10/15	(1) (1) (1) (1)
Lucin/Pilot	Cattle Sheep	05/16-02/28 (6) 04/01-04/14	(4)
Leppe	Cattle Sheep	01/01-03/28 01/01-03/15	(1) (1)
Warm Springs	Cattle	04/10-04/30 11/20-12/20	(1) (1)
Basin L & L	Cattle	12/20-04/19	12/01-03/31 (3)
Dove Creek	Cattle Horses	10/16-04/30 (6) 12/01-04/30	(1) (1)
Black Rock	Cattle	04/16-06/15	05/20-07/19 (5)
North Kelton	Cattle	11/01-03/31	11/01-04/30 (7)
Snowville	Cattle Sheep	11/15-04/30 (6) 01/01-02/22	(1) (1)

#### NOTES

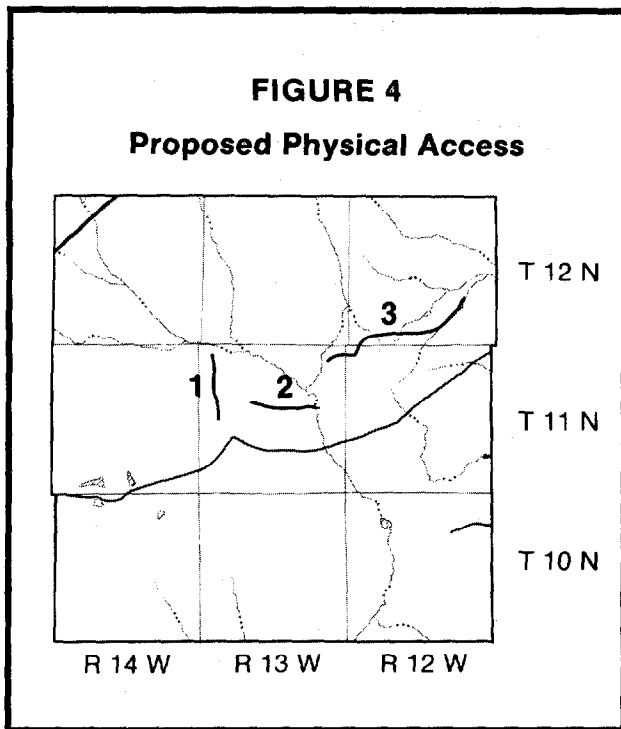
- (1) Season-of-use will remain as currently permitted until an AMP is completed and signed. At that time, the season-of-use could be adjusted to meet the requirements of the AMP.
- (2) The current season-of-use will be permitted until 12/31/87 at which time the allotment will be incorporated into the Yost Pasture system. If the incorporation does not take place by the above date, the proposed season-of-use will be implemented.
- (3) The current season-of-use will be permitted until an AMP is implemented. If an AMP is not signed, the proposed season-of-use will become effective.
- (4) The season-of-use in this allotment will remain the same as is currently permitted, unless the permittees within the allotment cannot agree on a proper allotment division and sign an AMP by 03/31/88. If an AMP is not signed, the proposed season-of-use will become effective.
- (5) The ending date for the grazing will be negotiated with the permittee. However, the ending date will not exceed 09/01.
- (6) The dates shown are the outside parameters of the grazing season. Within those dates, various permittees will graze livestock at different times.
- (7) This will be the allowable season-of-use unless an AMP is developed.

# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Proposed Decision 6

Physical access will be constructed, subject to available funds, on public lands within the following legal descriptions (also see Figure 4):

Description	Miles
1. T.11N., R.13W. Sections 6, 7, 18	3 miles
2. T.11N., R.13W. Sections 14, 15, 16	3 miles
3. T.11N., R.13W. Section 1	
T.11N., R.12W. Section 6	
T.12N., R.12W. Sections 31, 32, 33, 34	2 miles



## Rationale

BLM currently does not have access into two grazing allotments, Baker Hills and Dove Creek (southeast portion). Effective range monitoring and utilization studies require that BLM personnel have vehicular access to the allotments.

## Proposed Decision 7

Continue to work with Box Elder County in the control of noxious weeds which are invading road rights-of-way and native ranges.

## Rationale

This is BLM's current policy for dealing with noxious weeds in Box Elder County and was part of the Features Common to All Alternatives Section in the Draft RMP/EIS.

## AIR, SOIL AND WATERSHED PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Soil, water and air resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Such an evaluation will consider the impacts of any proposed project to soil, water and air resources in the affected area. Objectives of the air, soil, and watershed programs will be coordinated and implemented through other resource management programs. Watershed management activity plans will be written as needed for other areas.

Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards, including consultation with State agencies on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality. Management actions on public land within Donner Creek and Bettridge Creek watersheds and any single family domestic water sources will be designed to protect water quality and quantity.

Air quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards, including consultation with State agencies on proposed projects that may significantly affect air quality. Management actions on public land will be designed to protect against significant air quality deterioration.

Close coordination will be maintained with the State in the development or modification of their air quality implementation plans to assure BLM management options such as prescribed fire and smoke management are maintained. Coordination with the State will be continued on appropriate air quality classifications whenever BLM-managed areas of special concern (e.g., ACECs and scenic areas) have been identified as significant features or characters.

## Rationale

The Clean Water Act, the Soil Conservation Act, and the Clean Air Act set objectives for these resources and give requirements to be met. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ensure compatibility of projects with soil, water and air resource management and compliance with applicable Federal and State air and water standards, regulations and implementation plans.

### Proposed Decision 2

Acquire and protect water rights for water use on public land as directed by the Regional Solicitor and maintain them in cooperation with the State Engineer. Existing water rights will be evaluated to determine whether they are adequate in quantity and location to meet resource management requirements. Water rights will be placed in a program for rapid access and update. Future resource management requirements may result in the need to change existing water rights and acquire additional water rights. Private water rights on public lands will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure that water not needed for public uses is available for private use.

### Rationale

Water rights are required by the State for any and all uses of water except for Public Water Reserve 107 waters. Generally, water demand exceeds supply and creates conflict between users. Water rights allow proper development and use of the water resource by water right holders.

### Proposed Decision 3

Monitor selected perennial streams and Rosebud Station for water quality trend to insure that management activities on public lands comply with existing State water quality standards. BLM management activities will be coordinated with the Utah State Water Engineer, the Utah Division of Environmental Health, and U. S. Environmental Protection Agency for proper water management. The streams presently being monitored, their general locations and classifications are listed in Table 5 and shown in Figure 5.

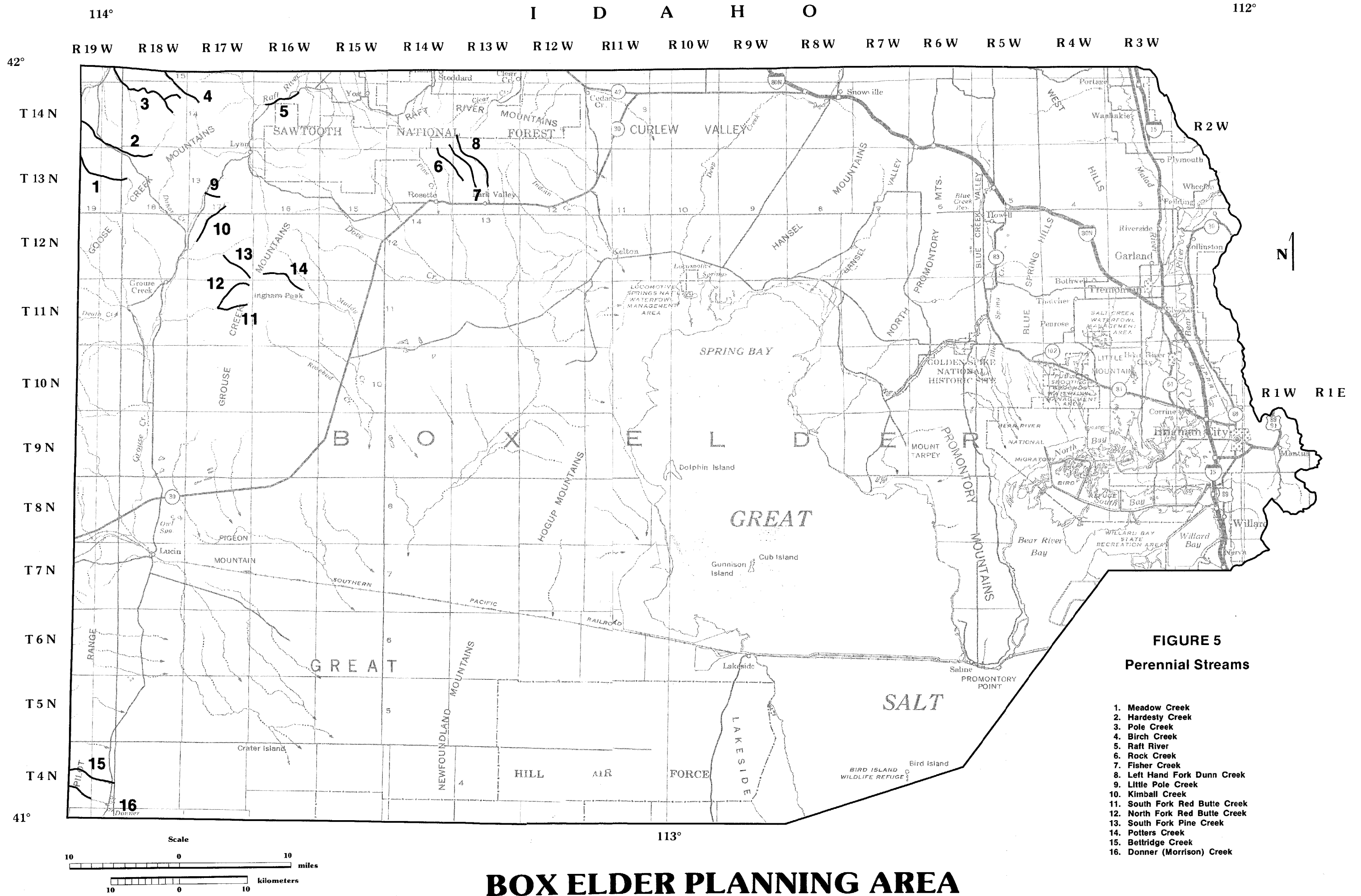
TABLE 5

#### PERENNIAL STREAM LOCATIONS AND STATE WATER QUALITY STANDARDS CLASSIFICATION

STREAM	GENERAL LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION
1. Donner Creek	T. 4N., R. 19W., Sec. 28	1C, 3A, 4
2. Bettridge Creek	T. 4N., R. 19W., Sec. 22	1C, 3A, 4
3. Meadow Creek	T. 13N., R. 19W., Sec. 14	Unclassified <sup>1</sup>
4. Hardesty Creek	T. 14N., R. 19W., Sec. 35	3A, 4
5. Pole Creek	T. 14N., R. 18W., Sec. 4-10	3A, 4
	T. 15N., R. 19W., Sec. 25	3A, 4
6. Birch Creek	T. 15N., R. 18W., Sec. 34-35	3A, 4
7. Pine Creek, South Fork	T. 12N., R. 17W., Sec. 36	3A, 4
8. Little Pole Creek	T. 13N., R. 17W., Sec. 28	3A, 4
9. Kimball Creek	T. 12N., R. 17W., Sec. 4	3A, 4
	T. 13N., R. 17W., Sec. 34	3A, 4
10. Red Butte Creek, North Fork	T. 11N., R. 17W., Sec. 1-3, 10	3A, 4
11. Red Butte Creek, South Fork	T. 11N., R. 17W., Sec. 12-14	3A, 4
12. Potters Creek	T. 12N., R. 16W., Sec. 32-33	3A, 4
13. Raft River	T. 14N., R. 16W., Sec. 8-10, 17	3A, 4
14. Rock Creek	T. 13N., R. 14W., Sec. 12	Unclassified <sup>1</sup>
	T. 13N., R. 13W., Sec. 18	3A, 4
15. Fisher Creek	T. 13N., R. 13W., Sec. 6, 8	3A, 4
16. Dunn Creek, Left Fork	T. 13N., R. 13W., Sec. 6	3A, 4

<sup>1</sup>Presently unclassified stream that is expected to be classified as 3A, 4.

Classifications - 1C Domestic water source  
3A Cold water fishery  
4 Agricultural water



NOTE: This map meets the National Map Accuracy Standards



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# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

## Rationale

Perennial streams are important water sources for wildlife, livestock, aquatic habitat, agricultural and domestic use. Water quality suitable to such uses needs to be maintained to ensure that these water sources continue to be available in the future. Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards, dated October 24, 1978, directed that all Federal agencies comply with local standards and limitations relating to water quality.

## Proposed Decision 4

Identify and evaluate areas of erosion on public land to meet the following objectives:

- Identify the erosion source(s) on public land;
- Evaluate improvement potential and prioritize areas for improvement;
- Identify methods for improvement which will maintain or improve the water and vegetative resources while providing for livestock and wildlife use as well as the maintenance of the watershed;
- Monitor vegetation and water conditions on the watershed.

Drainages to be evaluated include: Kimball Creek, Red Butte Creek, Grouse Creek, Rosebud Creek, Pole Creek, Birch Creek, Raft River and the north end of the Pilot Mountain Range.

## Rationale

In several drainage areas that are generally within a slight to moderate erosion condition class, erosion could accelerate if preventative and corrective actions are not taken. BLM is mandated by numerous laws including FLPMA, the Clean Water Act, and the Soil Conservation Act (1935) to maintain or improve the overall watershed quality including the water and vegetative resources.

## Proposed Decision 5

Manage riparian areas, including the stream riparian areas shown in Figure 5, for multiple use purposes such as wildlife, range, watershed and recreation. Riparian areas located on public lands will be managed to meet the following objectives:

- Identify the condition of riparian areas;
- Evaluate potential for improvement and prioritize projects to achieve this potential;
- Maintain or improve riparian areas to a satisfactory condition;
- Provide for the management necessary to meet the above goals and allotment specific objectives in activity plans, including applicable habitat management plans, allotment management plans, and the Goose Creek Multiple Use Management Plan;
- Seek cooperative efforts with adjoining landowners and other resource management agencies.

## Rationale

Riparian areas are an important resource for many land use activities. As a consequence, riparian areas become highly controversial, requiring intensive management. BLM is mandated by Executive Order 11990 and manual requirements to manage these areas for multiple use while providing for protection and improvement of the areas.

## Proposed Decision 6

Delineate the 100 year and 500 year floodplains on major drainages on public lands that include human occupation or facilities using currently established techniques. These floodplains include Grouse Creek, Goose Creek, Junction Creek, and Raft River. Once the floodplains are delineated, BLM will manage these areas to meet the following objectives:

- Retain all public lands within the 500 year floodplains;
- Take all necessary management actions to protect human life and minimize property damage; and
- Restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values of floodplains.

## Rationale

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, requires that floodplains and flood hazards be considered in all public land management. Appropriate management actions to reduce loss of life and property are required. The planning area has high potential for flash

# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

flooding as a result of heavy summer thunderstorms.

## Wildlife Program

### Proposed Decision 1

The following criteria must be met prior to BLM agreeing to big game reintroductions on public lands within the planning area:

- (1) BLM policy requirements as stated in Manual 6820 must be met.
- (2) The species to be established must meet the definition of a reestablishment (reintroduction) as defined in Manual section 6820.05c.
- (3) The reintroduction must be approved or sponsored by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR).
- (4) An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Habitat Management Plan (HMP) must determine:
  - that the reintroduction will not negatively affect any native endangered, threatened or sensitive species, either plant or animal;
  - that land use conflicts which cannot or have not been resolved will not result from the reintroduction. (In cases where the release may be of greater benefit than the competing use, the release may take precedence. Forage allocation for the proposed population will be based upon non-competitive forage availability, and UDWR will secure agreements with adjoining landowners.)
  - what studies are necessary to monitor the reintroduction.
- (5) Effective quarantine procedures must be implemented to insure that the release stock is disease-free.
- (6) Following the completion of the EA and HMP, a Cooperative Agreement between BLM and UDWR must be prepared to authorize the big game reintroduction.

The above decision applies only to big game species. Federally threatened, endangered and sensitive species will follow similar procedures but will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Fisheries and upland game species are not affected by this decision but must meet the criteria outlined in the Master Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) between UDWR and the BLM.

### Rationale

It is BLM policy to cooperate with state wildlife agencies, where possible, to reintroduce native species into historic ranges. The Master MOU between the BLM and UDWR also calls for this cooperation. The above criteria meet the Master MOU and BLM manual requirements for the reintroduction of big game species.

### Proposed Decision 2

Agree to and cooperate in a bighorn sheep reintroduction on the Pilot Mountain Range, not to exceed 30 animals on public lands in the planning area as specified in the Pilot Mountain HMP and accompanying cooperative transplant agreement. As noted in the HMP, BLM recognizes that an additional 30 animals would be allowed on the Utah side of the mountain range since approximately half the available habitat which the herd will utilize is located on private or State-owned land. Additional habitat and animals would be available on the Nevada side of the mountain range. A total of 64 AUMs would be allocated for use by the reintroduced bighorn sheep. Proposed bighorn sheep reintroduction areas are shown in Figure 6.

### Rationale

The Pilot Mountain HMP has analyzed this transplant and determined that no major resource conflicts exist and that suitable habitat and forage are available. A cooperative transplant agreement has been drafted. No conflicts are expected.

### Proposed Decision 3

Do not agree to the UDWR proposed elk reintroduction onto public lands on the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain ranges. No forage will be allocated for elk on the public lands on these mountain ranges. If a population develops on public land by natural migration, it will be allowed.

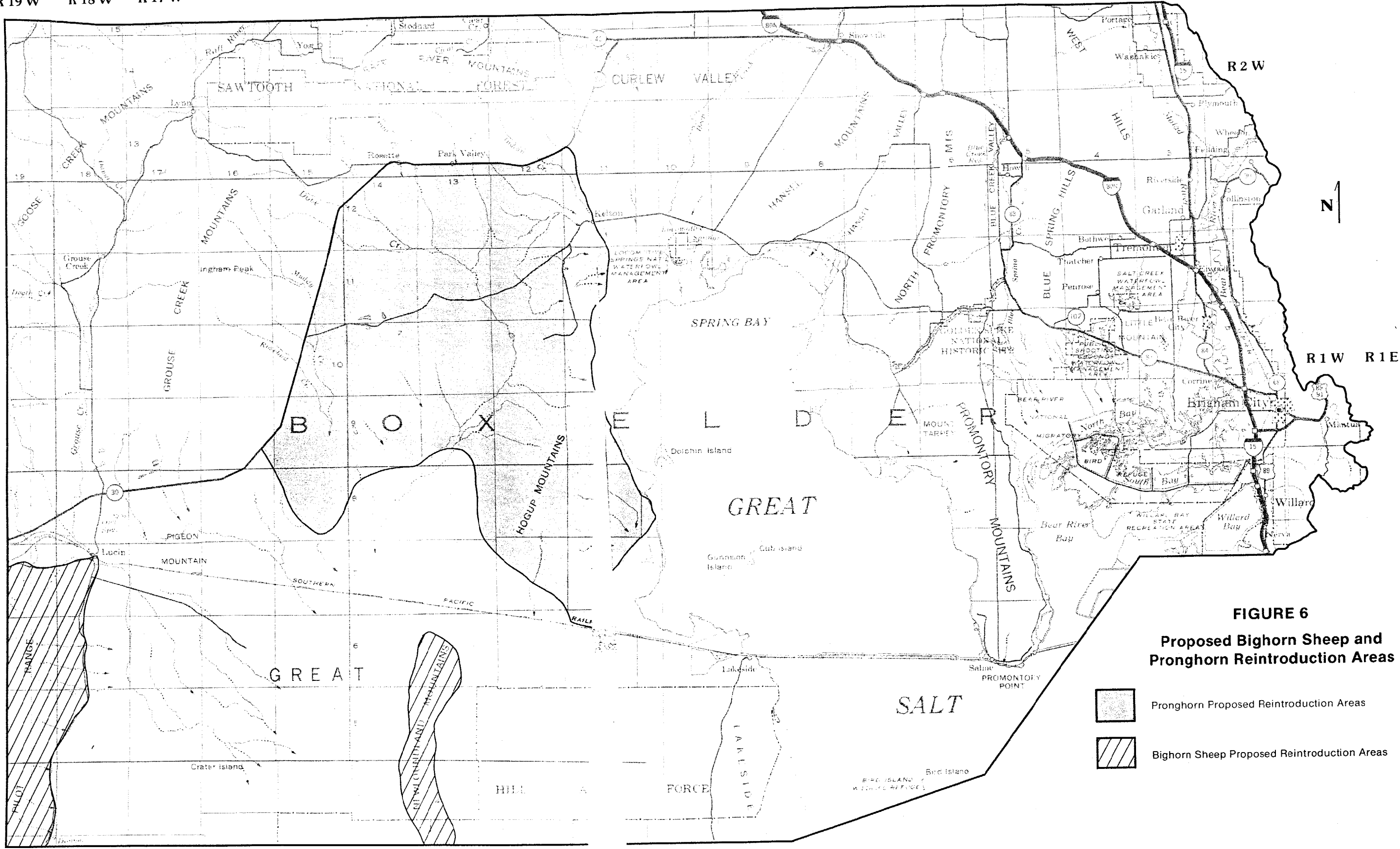
### Rationale

This proposed decision is a change from the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP. UDWR has requested that BLM agree to an elk reintroduction onto the Grouse Creek/Raft

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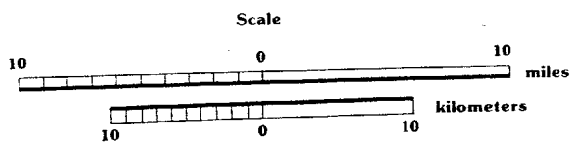
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**FIGURE 6**  
**Proposed Bighorn Sheep and Pronghorn Reintroduction Areas**

■ Pronghorn Proposed Reintroduction Areas  
▨ Bighorn Sheep Proposed Reintroduction Areas



**BOX ELDER PLANNING AREA**

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## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

River Mountain Ranges and allocate forage for these elk. It is BLM policy to cooperate with state wildlife agencies, where possible, to reintroduce native species into historic ranges. It is also BLM policy to refrain from wildlife reintroductions in areas where potential conflicts with existing uses have not or cannot be resolved (BLM Manual 6820.06c). In the planning criteria it was stipulated that the effect of public land management on neighboring land will be considered. BLM is a minority landowner within these mountain ranges. Private landowners are the majority landowners; they foresee elk tearing up fences, damaging haystacks, causing crop depredation, and competing with livestock for forage on private lands throughout most of the year. The Box Elder Sounding Board, with one dissenting voice, recommended that BLM not allow this reintroduction. The large number of verbal and written comments opposing this reintroduction persuaded BLM that existing land use conflicts had not been resolved; therefore, BLM's decision is not to agree to this reintroduction.

Public opinion indicated that natural immigration of elk into these areas would be acceptable. If natural immigration were to happen, an HMP, EA, and cooperative agreement would need to be completed to set a herd limit and allocate forage for the elk population.

### Proposed Decision 4

Agree to and cooperate in a bighorn sheep reintroduction on the Newfoundland Mountain Range provided that (1) the present domestic sheep permit is voluntarily relinquished or converted to cattle use and (2) an HMP and associated cooperative transplant agreement have been completed. The authorized population of bighorn sheep would be approximately 100 animals and require 184 AUMs of forage per year. The 184 AUMs of forage are authorized but cannot be utilized until the previously stated conditions have been met. Figure 6 shows proposed reintroduction areas for bighorn sheep.

### Rationale

Transplanting native sheep into an area used by domestic sheep would be impractical since the transfer of disease and/or parasites from the domestic sheep could eliminate the native sheep population. Therefore, the Newfoundland

Mountain Range would be suitable native sheep habitat if the domestic sheep use were removed. UDWR has expressed an interest in this transplant and BLM concurs that it would be a reasonable and beneficial use of the available resources, if the conflict with domestic sheep use were eliminated.

### Proposed Decision 5

Allow pronghorn to be transplanted or to increase in areas presently inhabited following the completion of an HMP and subsequent cooperative transplant agreement on the following 19 allotments: Owl Springs, U & I, Watercress, Lucin/Pilot, Basin L & L, Young Brothers, Ward, Mann, Matlin, Red Dome, Selmon/Goring, Terrace, Dove Creek, Peplin, Baker Hills, Black Rock, South Kelton, North Kelton, and Snowville. The total population would be 2,250 animals requiring 1,586 AUMs per year. Proposed transplant areas are shown in Figure 6.

### Rationale

UDWR has expressed an interest in establishing this pronghorn population, and BLM concurs that it would be a reasonable and beneficial use of the available resources. The population and AUMs stated above are optimum numbers, and it is highly likely that only a small percentage of this number of animals will ever become established within this large area of habitat. Pronghorn do not require large amounts of forage per animal and are usually not considered to be highly competitive with domestic livestock. There should be no major conflicts between the pronghorn and other resource uses.

### Proposed Decision 6

Authorize initial forage use for big game species as follows:

Mule deer	15,570 AUMs
Elk	344 AUMs
Pronghorn	1,586 AUMs
Bighorn sheep	248 AUMs
TOTAL	17,748 AUMs

Big game use by allotment is shown in Appendix 3.

A total of 17,748 AUMs will be authorized for wildlife. Of this, 15,570 AUMs are for mule deer,

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

which are currently at optimum numbers. A total of 344 AUMs would be authorized for elk use for the Pilot Mountain herd. The 910 AUMs requested by UDWR for elk use on the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges would not be allocated. The 1,586 AUMs for pronghorn use include present forage demand and forage needed by increased numbers and transplants. The 248 AUMs authorized for bighorn sheep include 64 AUMs for the Pilot Mountain flock as approved in the Pilot Mountain HMP and 184 AUMs for the Newfoundland Mountain transplant. The 14 bighorn sheep AUMs requested by UDWR on the Raft River Mountain Range would not be allocated.

### Rationale

It is BLM policy to allocate the public land vegetation resources in accordance with the multiple use principles as required by FLMPA and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978. The authorized forage for wildlife as identified in this proposed decision provides all of the forage needed for optimum numbers, including reintroduction for all big game except the proposed Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain elk reintroduction and the proposed Raft River bighorn sheep reintroduction.

The majority of the authorized forage would be use by existing big game animals. A total of 1,212 AUMs would be allocated for increased pronghorn (964 AUMs) and bighorn sheep reintroductions (248 AUMs). This increased AUM allocation will not affect existing uses and will be spread over 21 allotments (19 for pronghorn and two for bighorn sheep). Sufficient forage is available to meet the proposed use.

The decision not to allocate 14 AUMs for bighorn sheep on public land on the Raft River Mountain Range is based upon the uncertainty that the reintroduction will take place. The seasonal use areas for these animals are not specifically known. The decision not to allocate the 910 AUMs for elk use on the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges is based upon Proposed Decision 2. If natural immigration were to eventually establish an elk herd on the mountain ranges to the point that allocation of forage becomes necessary, an HMP and cooperative agreement would be completed to set a herd limit and allocate forage.

### Proposed Decision 7

BLM will protect important wildlife habitat values from disturbing activities by restricting seismic work, well development, new road construction, rights-of-ways and other disturbing activities excluding maintenance activities in the following areas and during the stated time periods:

- (1) within mule deer winter range between December 1 and April 15 each year;
- (2) within 0.5 mile of active raptor nest sites between March 1 and July 15 each year;
- (3) within 0.5 mile of sage grouse strutting grounds (leks) between March 15 and June 15 each year or year-long if the disturbance would negatively impact the effectiveness of the lek for more than an off-seasonal basis.
- (4) within 600 feet of riparian/aquatic habitats yearlong, if the proposed activity could significantly affect water quality or productivity of the riparian/aquatic zone.

These restrictions were limited to only fluid mineral activities in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP. In the Proposed RMP, however, they have been applied to all disturbing activities to assure that these important wildlife values will be adequately protected. Specific exceptions to the above stated restrictions may be granted by BLM if it can be shown that the proposed activity will not seriously disturb the wildlife habitat values being protected.

### Rationale

Implementation of the above measures will provide necessary protection of key wildlife habitats in the planning area. These measures will provide adequate protection for important breeding, wintering, watering, and feeding habitats for a variety of wildlife species, as well as preventing unnecessary degradation of the environment.

Limiting activities in mule deer winter range will minimize disturbance and aid survival of wintering deer.

Restrictions within 0.5 mile of active raptor nest sites will reduce nest abandonment and increase the production of the various raptor species within the planning area.

Protection of sage grouse strutting grounds will maximize breeding opportunity, which will aid in increasing annual productivity and survival.

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Restricting activities that could affect water quality or productivity within 600 feet of riparian/aquatic habitats will aid in protection of these important areas from degradation, such as chemical pollution, sedimentation, and excessive compaction.

These measures also comply with mandates as outlined in Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, Federal Water Pollution Control Act, and FLPMA (Section 103).

### Proposed Decision 8

Develop comprehensive wildlife HMPs in the planning area according to the following priority list:

- (1) Blue Spring Marsh (complete Fiscal Year 1986)
- (2) Salt Wells (complete Fiscal Year 1987)
- (3) Sheep Trail/Curlew Junction/Hogup Mountain Range (complete Fiscal Year 1989)
- (4) Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges (complete Fiscal Year 1991)
- (5) Newfoundland Mountain Range
- (6) Goose Creek Mountain Range

The HMPs will be developed along allotment boundaries to the extent possible and will be coordinated to the greatest possible degree with concurrent development of AMPs. These HMPs will contain habitat development proposals and each will be reviewed by a Technical Review Committee and will be covered by an environmental assessment.

Habitat management opportunities for threatened and endangered species will be identified in the HMPs. The objective would be to assist in delisting the species.

### Rationale

It is BLM policy to develop comprehensive activity plans that state the management objectives and the steps necessary to accomplish these objectives for a given resource within a certain area. Once signed, the above listed HMPs will guide the wildlife program within the planning area in an orderly and economic fashion.

This listing differs from the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP. BLM's Washington Office has issued directives that require HMPs to be developed based upon the following

priorities: (1) threatened or endangered species needs, (2) wetland habitats, and (3) other species' crucial habitat needs. BLM's requirement to complete a HMP and subsequent cooperative transplant agreement prior to allowing reintroductions also influences the HMP priority list.

The Blue Springs Marsh and Salt Wells areas are at the top of the priority list because they include wetlands. The Sheep Trail/Curlew Junction/Hogup Mountain Range is next on the list because of the proposed pronghorn reintroductions. The Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain area is next due to its importance for a variety of wildlife. The Newfoundland Mountain area has a proposed decision to reintroduce bighorn sheep, but this transplant will probably not occur for several years. The Goose Creek Mountain Range is last because it has no proposed reintroductions and is scheduled to have a Multiple Use Management Plan (MUMP) completed in 1987. Wildlife and wildlife habitat needs will be a major part of this MUMP. The Silver Island HMP was dropped because it will be covered in the Pony Express Resource Area HMP priority list.

## RECREATION PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Designate all public land in the planning area as either open, limited, or closed to motorized vehicle use as follows:

Open	999,634 acres
Limited	12,160 acres
Donner and Bettridge Creeks	980 acres (Limited to designated roads and trails)
Visual Resource Management Class II	10,930 acres (Limited to existing roads and trails)
Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade and Adjacent Sites	250 acres (Limited to existing roads and trails)
Closed	0 acres

Proposed off-road vehicle designations are shown in Figure 7.

### Rationale

Areas designated as open either do not need



## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

ORV limitations or do not warrant ORV limitations to protect resource values when compared to the costs of imposing and enforcing those limitations. A total of 20,300 acres of mule deer crucial winter range, 2,000 acres of raptor nest sites, 5,100 acres of sage grouse breeding complexes and 240 acres of riparian/aquatic areas were changed from the limited category in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP to the open category in the proposed plan. No significant conflicts with ORVs exist in these areas. If conflicts develop, steps will be taken to implement emergency closures until the problems can be resolved.

Donner and Bettridge Creeks watersheds are proposed to be designated as an ACEC for the watershed values and protection of a threatened species. It is necessary to limit motorized vehicle use to the main entry-exit road of each watershed in order to protect water quality and the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. Land to be designated as limited includes the north half of T. 4N., R. 19W., Section 22 (340 acres) in Bettridge Creek watershed and Section 28 (640 acres) in Donner Creek watershed. Seventy acres of Donner and Bettridge Creeks which were recommended for a closed designation in the Preferred Alternative have been changed to limited in this proposed plan. Limiting vehicles to designated roads would adequately protect the resource values while allowing use for other activities.

Motorized vehicle use will be limited to existing roads and trails on public lands that are designated as Visual Resource Management Class II. This affects 17,630 acres in the Red Butte Mountain area and 3,300 acres in the Devils Playground area for a total of 10,930 acres. This limitation protects scenic quality in both areas as well as watershed and cultural/historical values on Red Butte Mountain.

The old Central Pacific Railroad Grade and associated historic sites between the Golden Spike Historic Site and Lucin are proposed as an ACEC. This area was identified as open in the Preferred Alternative of the Draft RMP. However, a limited designation for ORVs would be necessary to meet the protective and interpretive needs of the ACEC. Motorized vehicle travel on public land would be limited to existing roads and trails upon the railroad grade right-of-way and all adjacent historical sites. Approximately 250 acres would be designated as limited.

## VISUAL RESOURCE PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Visual resource management classes assigned within the planning area are as follows:

VRM Class I	0 acres
VRM Class II	
Red Butte Mountain	7,630 acres
Devils Playground	3,300 acres
TOTAL	10,930 acres
VRM Class III	
Pilot Mountains	28,800 acres
Newfoundland Mountains	23,705 acres
Burnt Mountain	2,346 acres
Goose Creek Mountains	17,920 acres
Raft River Narrows	810 acres
TOTAL	73,581 acres
VRM Class IV	927,283 acres

The proposed VRM classifications are shown in Figure 8.

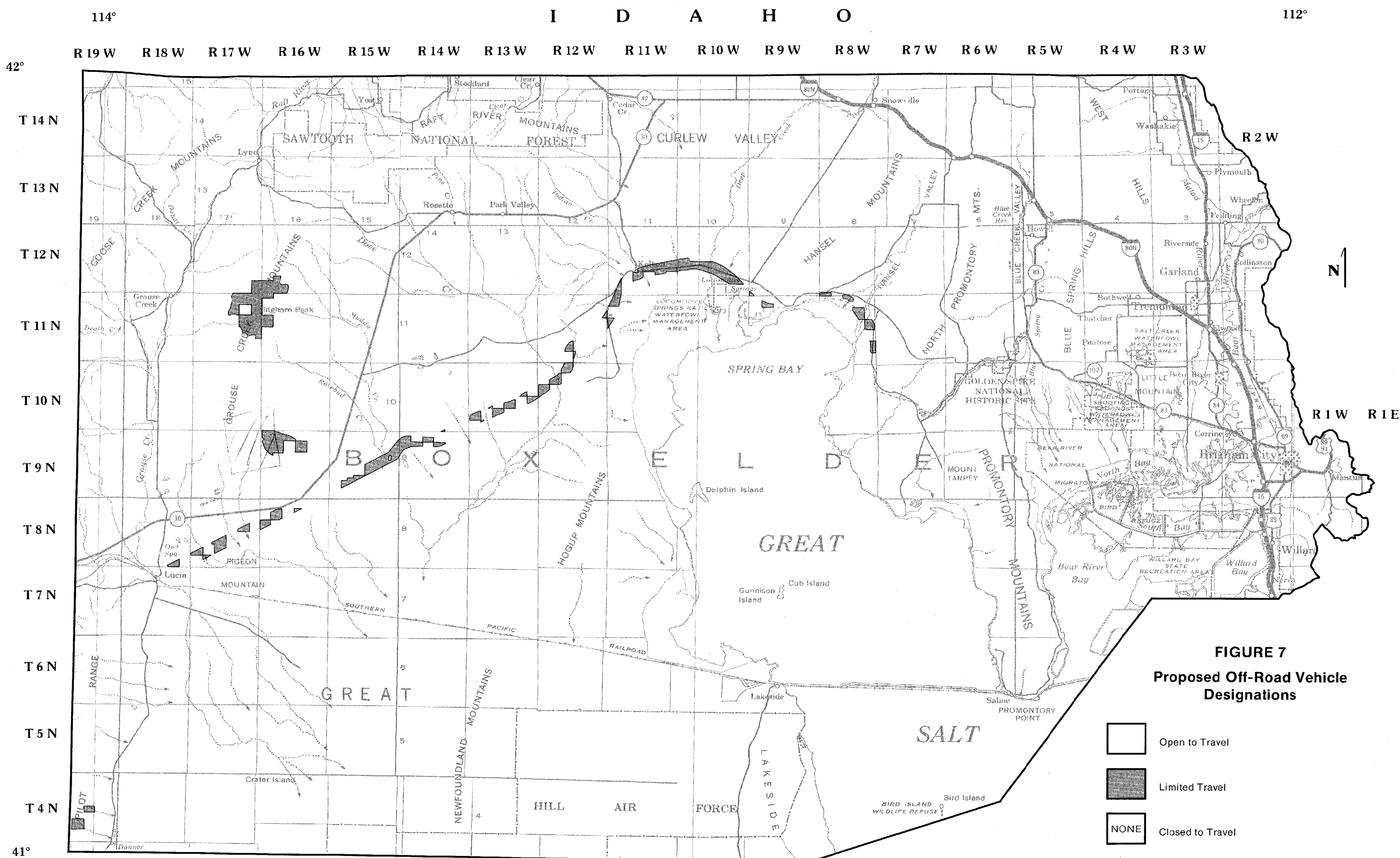
### Rationale

This proposed decision is a modification of the Preferred Alternative in the Draft RMP. Since publication of the Draft RMP, the planning area has been reinventoried to insure that all VRM criteria are met. Therefore, there are changes from the acreages listed in each VRM class in the Draft RMP. The majority of the lands in Box Elder County are representative of the Great Basin and are rated as Class IV. However, the Class III and especially the Class II areas offer significant visual diversity. These areas exhibit visual contrast such as steep and rugged terrain, perennial streams and riparian areas, unique geological features and significant vegetative diversity.

## CULTURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

Cultural resources will continue to be inventoried and evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Such evaluation will consider the impacts of any proposed project to cultural resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for cultural resources.



# BOX ELDER PLANNING AREA

NOTE: This map meets the National Map Accuracy Standards

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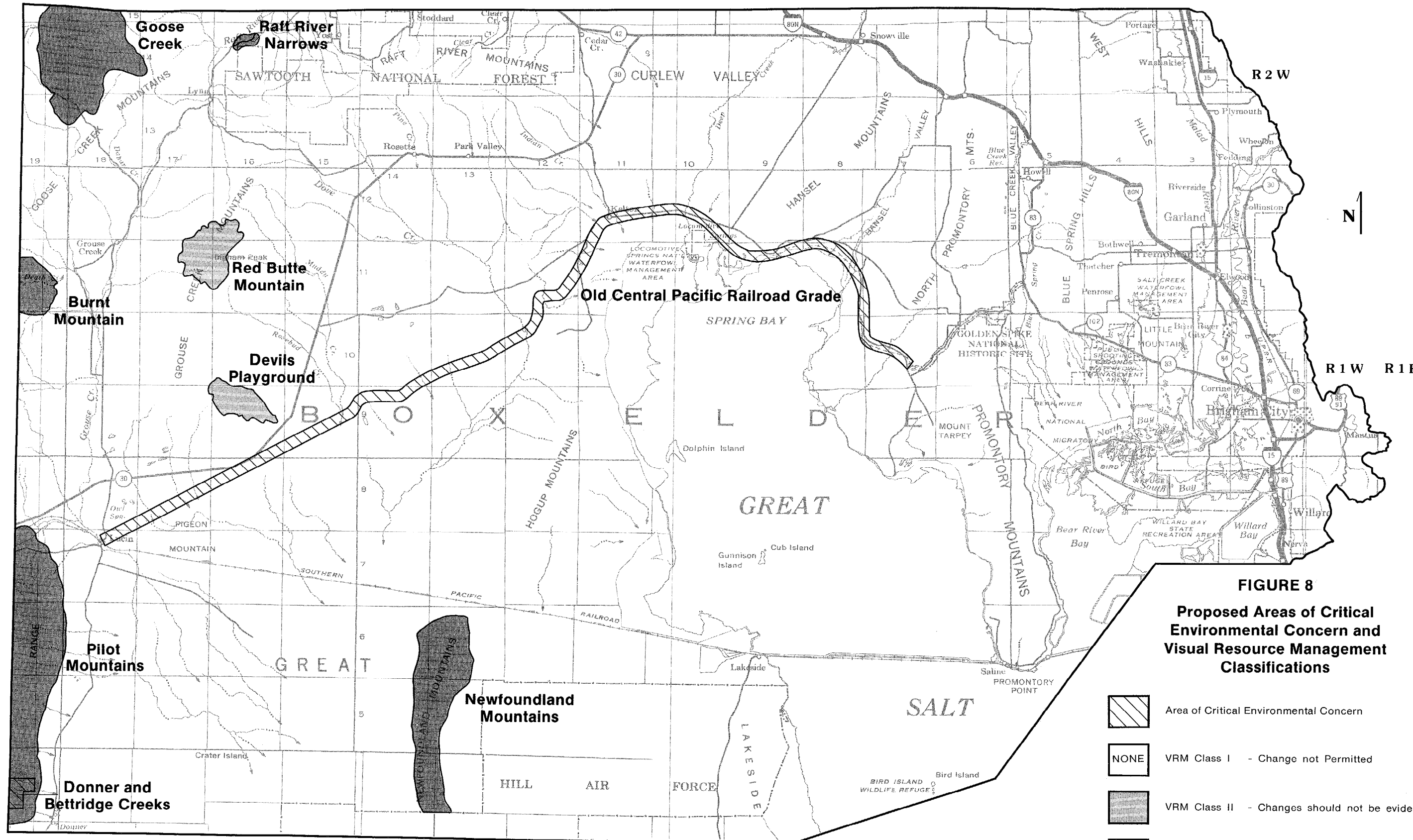





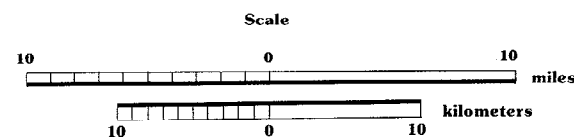


FIGURE 8

**Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Visual Resource Management Classifications**

-  Area of Critical Environmental Concern
-  VRM Class I - Change not Permitted
-  VRM Class II - Changes should not be evident
-  VRM Class III - Changes slightly evident
-  VRM Class IV - Changes may attract attention



# BOX ELDER PLANNING AREA

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# PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

For existing cultural properties, a determination of significance would be made prior to any recommended project being implemented. In project areas where resource knowledge is limited or unknown, both examination of existing data and field inventories would be done to identify the resources and evaluate the cultural value of each. Prior to any activity plan or project that may adversely affect these properties, the State Historic Preservation Office would be consulted in the determination of effect upon the property. For any site within the project area which would be affected by the activity plan or project, mitigation measures would be undertaken. These may include the following:

- (1) Adjusting of the project boundaries to avoid impacting the sites;
- (2) Mapping, photo documenting, and drawing the cultural resource before proceeding with project implementation;
- (3) Adopting methods or techniques that would minimize disturbance to the site and its environmental setting;
- (4) Removing and relocating the cultural property to another appropriate location after documentation of the property and the development of a management plan to maintain the historic value of the property, or
- (5) Excavating the archaeological properties with a goal of preserving the values of the properties.

The inventory or mitigation would be directed by BLM cultural resource specialists or through contracts with individuals or institutions meeting professional standards.

## Rationale

This is BLM's current policy for managing cultural resources in Box Elder County and was included in the Features Common to all Alternatives Section in the Draft RMP/EIS.

## FOREST PRODUCTS PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

The forestry program will continue to be implemented as outlined in the Bear River Resource Area Woodlands Product Plan written and approved in 1984. The plan will be updated or revised as needed by 1987. The plan will service the demands of the public for

woodlands products while insuring that resource values are maintained or enhanced.

## Rationale

This program can be used as an additional vegetative management tool to enhance watershed, range and wildlife programs while providing for the increased public demand for woodlands products from western Box Elder County. Public demand for woodlands products on the Wasatch Front is increasing as indicated by data gathered by the Sawtooth National Forest.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### Proposed Decision 1

A fire suppression plan will be developed by an interdisciplinary team and will include the following:

- (1) Full fire suppression will be implemented in areas:
  - where wildfire may result in loss of life.
  - where destruction of man-made facilities such as homes, hay yards and power substations could occur.
  - where fire would damage important natural resource values, such as the salt desert shrub vegetative type.
- (2) Limited suppression will be implemented in areas where:
  - resource values may benefit or be increased by fire such as in the pinyon/juniper vegetative type.
  - hazards to firefighters, including potential aircraft hazards, exist.
  - terrain features cause extreme difficulty in fire suppression, leading to heavy damage of equipment.
  - the cost of fire suppression exceeds the benefit.
- (3) Prescribed fire will be implemented in areas where resource management objectives can be met by utilizing planned or unplanned ignitions. Within prescribed areas, both wildfires and prescribed fires must fall between predetermined parameters (prescription) including but not limited to weather conditions, fuel type and fire behavior. If these conditions are exceeded, appropriate suppression action will be taken.

## PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

(4) Areas of fire suppression responsibilities in Box Elder County will be negotiated among cooperating agencies in cooperative agreements.

### Rationale

A fire suppression plan will facilitate the use of both planned and unplanned fires as an important watershed, range and wildlife management tool. This plan will also provide a cost-effective alternative to the present full fire suppression.

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

### Proposed Decision 1

Designate approximately 250 acres of the historic Central Pacific Railroad Grade and associated sites, between the Golden Spike Historic Site on the east and Lucin on the west, as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) (see Figure 8). Take the following actions:

- (1) Recommend the ACEC area for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
- (2) Limit off-road vehicle use to existing roads and trails as identified in Proposed Decision 1 for Recreation.
- (3) Establish a steering committee, comprised of representatives of BLM, the National Park Service, Box Elder County, the Utah State Preservation Office, and others as appropriate, to guide development and implementation of a management plan for the ACEC. The plan will include:
  - interpretive needs;
  - protection measures, such as requirements for steering committee review of proposals for rights-of-way which would cross the ACEC; and
  - consideration of public safety.
- (4) Pursue a written memorandum of understanding between Box Elder County and the Utah State Historic Preservation Office for preservation and management of existing structures and historical sites within the ACEC.

### Rationale

The grade and associated sites are of national

historic significance. There presently is no organized plan to protect this national resource from accelerated man-caused deterioration. Use of the steering committee to oversee development and implementation of the plan will assure a balanced plan that includes input from the appropriate entities.

Without designation of the area as one of critical environmental concern and without taking the above actions, the grade and associated sites will not be adequately protected and will not receive due prominence as a nationally historic remnant of the nation's first transcontinental railroad.

### Proposed Decision 2

Designate approximately 1120 acres of the Donner Creek and Bettridge Creek watersheds as an ACEC (see Figure 8). Prepare an ACEC plan that includes the entirety of the two watersheds, including the Nevada portion if the Elko District of BLM is agreeable.

### Rationale

Donner and Bettridge Creeks are habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. This is believed to be the purest remaining strain of this fish. This is also the only known location of this fish in Utah; the only other known area of occurrence is the Lahontan Basin of Nevada. The Lahontan cutthroat trout is therefore of national importance. Both streams also are of sufficient water quality to be potable. Wendover City has water rights on Donner Creek for municipal purposes. The watershed of the two streams is relatively small and will require planned management if existing water quality and trout habitat are to be maintained.

The entirety of the Pilot Mountains was identified for designation as an ACEC in the preferred alternative. All of the area except Donner and Bettridge Creeks has been dropped from ACEC designation in the proposed plan. This is based on the finding that there are no unique values of regional or national importance and also that present management practices or management practices to be implemented through the RMP provide adequate protection.

### Proposed Decision 3

Do not designate Red Butte Mountain as an ACEC.

# **PROPOSED BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **Rationale**

This proposed decision differs from the preferred alternative in the Draft RMP. Detailed field examination of Red Butte Mountain resulted in the determination that designation as an ACEC is not justified. This is based on the finding that there are no unique resource values of regional or national importance and also that present management practices or management practices to be implemented through the RMP and subsequent activity planning provide adequate protection.



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# THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This portion of the document is the Final Environmental Impact Statement. It contains the comments on the Draft RMP/EIS and BLM's responses to those comments. It also contains the revisions and corrections of the Draft RMP/EIS.

## COORDINATION IN REVIEW OF THE DRAFT RMP/EIS

The Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on April 26, 1985. Its availability and the time and place for the public hearing were announced in the Federal Register on April 19, 1985. A news release was also issued to notify interested people about the comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS. July 25, 1985 was the deadline for submission of written comments. The list of agencies, organizations, and individuals who received copies of the Draft RMP/EIS is available for review at the Salt Lake District Office.

Public workshops were held May 15 at Grouse Creek, May 16 at Park Valley, and June 6 at Brigham City to explain the contents of the Draft RMP/EIS and the process for commenting. A public hearing was held June 6 in the Box Elder County Courthouse in Brigham City. Copies of the hearing transcript are available at the Salt Lake District Office.

All written comments and oral comments from the public hearing were reviewed for consideration in preparation of the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Those comments which presented new data, questioned the facts or analysis presented, or raised questions or issues which related directly to the scope of the Draft RMP and EIS have been given a response. Testimonies or letters which were general or simply indicated a preference for an alternative have been included in this document but were not given a response. Comments which were received too late for inclusion in the Final EIS will be given consideration in the decision-making process.

The Box Elder Sounding Board, an 11-member advisory committee composed of local citizens

and agency experts on resources and uses in the county, also provided input on the Draft RMP/EIS.

A 30-day protest period will be provided for public protests on this Proposed Plan and Final EIS. If no protests are received, a formal Record of Decision will be issued following completion of the 30-day period.

## Comment Letters

Letters commenting on the Draft RMP/EIS were received from the following organizations and individuals. (Letters listed in the order they were received.)

Letter Number	Commentor/Signature
1	Golden Spike Historic Site/Davies
2	Humane Society of Utah/Fox
3	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Office/Ruesink
4	Utah State University/West
5	Bureau of Reclamation/Hirschi
6	Golden Spike Historic Site/Davies
7	Stuart Hughes/Hughes
8	Utah Wildlife Federation/Combs
9	Utah Nature Study Society/Hovingh
10	Soil Conservation Service/Holt
11	The J.P. Ranch/Payne
12	True Oil Company/Byron
13	The Nature Conservancy/Tuhy
14	Joann Tanner/Tanner
15	Hartt Wixom/Wixom
16	Utah Hunters Federation/Stevenson
17	Atlantic Richfield Company/Moseley
18	Mrs. Norman Kimber/Kimber
19	U.S. Forest Service Sawtooth National Forest/Stoleson
20	Jay Tanner/Tanner
21	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service /Garrison Ecological Services
22	Jack Kimber/Kimber
23	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency /Vodehnal
24	Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association/Frell
25	State of Utah/Governor Bangerter

The following section contains copies of all letters received along with the responses to comments.

# FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## Oral Comments At The Public Hearing

The following people presented comments at the public hearing (commentors listed in the order they presented remarks):

Comment Number	Commentor
1-6	Conrad Maxfield
7-10	Gary Rose
11-16	Alan Kunzler
19-23	Dean Stephens

The following section contains responses to specific comments presented at the public hearing.

## Comment Letter 1



### United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GOLDEN SPIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
P.O. BOX 4  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84102

IN REPLY REFER TO:

April 24, 1985

#### Memorandum

To: Box Elder Resource Management Team Leader

From: Superintendent, Golden Spike National Historic Site

Subject: Comments on Draft Box Elder Plan and EIS

Attached are photocopied pages from the plan with minor corrections and a few comments.

Because of our interest in the historic railroad grade, we have examined the plan with primary emphasis on the cultural resources.

- 47
- 1.1 Not well defined or documented is the ownership of the old Central Pacific Right-of-Way. If BLM controls only a portion of it, who controls the rest? Is it the Southern Pacific RR?

Because Alternative 3 affords better protection through the limitation of ORV's on the old grade, we prefer this alternative. If the conditions affecting cultural resources in Alternative 3 could be applied to Alternative 2, we would have no problem endorsing Alternative 2 as the preferred. We hope that is possible.

The staff at Golden Spike stands ready to assist BLM in your efforts to protect and interpret the cultural resources found in your Box Elder management unit. Please call on us if we can cooperate.

  
Denny Davies

enclosures

## Response to Letter 1

- 1.1 That part of the old Central Pacific right-of-way that is located on what is now public land managed by BLM is owned by the United States. It is the opinion of BLM that the part located on what is now private land is private.

## Comment Letter 1

## Response to Letter 1

### CHAP. 1-PURPOSE AND NEED

Table 1-1

#### BLM Planning and Resource Management Interrelationships

AGENCY/GROUP	INTERRELATIONSHIP
<b>FEDERAL AGENCIES</b>	
Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	FWS issues a biological opinion on the effects of this RMP on endangered species. BLM authorizes predator control on planning area allotments. The actual control work is done by FWS under an ongoing predator control program.
U. S. Forest Service (USFS)	Administers adjacent lands in Sawtooth and Caribou National Forests.
National Parks Service (NPS)	Administers Golden Spike National <sup>Historic Site</sup> <del>Monument</del>
<b>STATE AGENCIES</b>	
Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife Resources Division of Water Rights Division of State Lands & Forestry Division of Oil Gas & Mining	Administers resource management program on adjacent State of Utah lands.
Division of Environmental Health	Administers solid wastes, water quality and air quality programs.
<b>Local Government</b>	
Box Elder County	Administers zoning and implements county master plan.

1.2 This change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 13.)

## Comment Letter 1

### CHAP. 2-DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES

#### Noxious Weed Control

Ox-eye Weed, *Lactuca tinctoria*, is a noxious weed which in the last 5 years has rapidly invaded foothills and other native range areas throughout northern Utah. Specific locations in the Box Elder Planning Area needing attention from BLM and county weed control are in the vicinity of:

T.12N., R.17W., Sec. 18, W1/2W1/2  
T. 12N., R.18W., Sec. 12, E1/2E1/2  
T.11N., R.12W., Sec. 22, SE1/4NE1/4  
T.12N., R.11W., Sec. 18, W1/2W1/2  
T.13N., R.11W., Sec. 30

1.3

#### Allotment Management Plans

Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) will be prepared according to the following guidelines:

Improve (I) category allotments will receive top priority for completion of AMPs. Maintain (M) category allotment AMPs will be completed as time and funding permit.

The general objective of each category I AMP would be to resolve existing conflicts and issues through implementation of rangeland improvement projects or other management procedures such as season-of-use adjustments, increases and decreases in livestock numbers, and grazing systems. The long-term objective for I category allotments would be to move them to the M category once problems are resolved.

AMPs for M category allotments will serve to formally document current management felt to be satisfactory.

AMPs would not normally be prepared for a C category allotment unless conditions arise which would warrant changing the allotment to the M or I category.

#### Habitat Management Plans

BLM has identified the following prioritized list of areas for which habitat management plans should be prepared:

Blue Springs Marsh

Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges

Goose Creek Mountain Range

Sheep Trail/Curlew Junction Area

Newfoundland Mountain Range

Hogup Mountain Range

Silver Island Mountain Range

Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade

Pursue the following management program for the old Central Pacific Railroad Grade:

1. Nominate the abandoned Promontory Branch grade and associated sites between Lucin and Promontory to the National Register of Historic Places.

2. Recommend the grade for study and possible designation as a National Historic Trail.

3. Pursue a written memorandum of understanding with Box Elder County for preservation of all structures and historical sites associated with the grade.

4. Develop an interpretive program to help preserve the existing structures and sites associated with the grade.

5. Prepare a protection plan which would not encourage development or recreational use of the grade.

#### Visual Resource Management

BLM completed an inventory of visual resources in the Box Elder Planning Area in 1982. Visual resources are the combination of landform, water, color, vegetative, and man-made features and other landscape characteristics. BLM has developed a system for classifying and managing these visual resources. The system, explained in BLM Manual 8400, places landscapes into visual resource management (VRM) classes that indicate the overall significance of the visual environment and establish management objectives for determining the acceptable degree of change. BLM proposes to designate the following VRM classes and acreage in each within the planning area.

## Response to Letter 1

- 1.3 Approximately 250 acres along the grade would be limited for ORV use. See Recreation Proposed Decision 1.

## Comment Letter 1

### CHAP. 3-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

- Tree-lined (park) zones provide shade in summer and shelter in winter.

#### Recreation

The Box Elder Planning Area is currently managed as part of BLM's Salt Lake District-wide extensive recreation management area. In addition, the old Central Pacific Railroad Grade has been designated as a special management area. BLM has not developed any recreation sites in the planning area.

Many opportunities for dispersed forms of recreation are found on public lands in the Box Elder Planning Area, including hunting, camping, hiking, rock climbing, sightseeing, nature study, off-road vehicle use, rock collecting, wood gathering, and exploring historic sites. However, actual use of the area is minimal. Most use occurs during the mule deer hunt in the Goose Creek and Grouse Creek Mountains. Organized recreation groups have not recognized the area as a viable location for staging events, primarily because of harsh weather conditions and because permits are more difficult to obtain in areas of mixed ownership.

The old Central Pacific Railroad grade may provide an opportunity for interpretive services. However, BLM manages only 20.5 miles of the 54.7 miles of grade between the old railroad towns of Kelton and Lucin. Since 1982, BLM has corresponded with Southern Pacific Railroad, who now controls the railroad lands, to negotiate a transfer of these lands to Federal management. Acquisition of these lands would consolidate public ownership and simplify recreation management of the old railroad grade.

#### Cultural Resources

Numerous archeological and historical sites have been located on public lands. None are presently on the National Register of Historic Places, but a 1981 computer analysis showed that some of these sites are potential nominees (Holmer, 1981).

Archeological sites indicate a fairly constant occupation from about 8,000 years ago. Early Archaic occupants (6,000 B. C. to 300 A. D. ) harvested marsh resources around the Great Salt Lake and hunted in upland areas. The introduction of pinyon pine into the higher mountains to the northwest about 3,500 years ago resulted in

*the word "introduction" implies a man-caused event. Perhaps better to say would be "the natural (or ecological) progression of pinyon pine ...."*



The Pilot Mountains in Western Box Elder County

## Response to Letter 1

- 1.4 This change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 98.)

## Comment Letter 1

### CHAP. 3-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

seasonal use of that resource as well. The Fremont people (300 to 1300 A.D.) also gathered marsh resources around the lake, hunted the uplands for bison and antelope, and grew corn and perhaps other crops. Numic or Shoshone people (1300 A.D. to the advent of white settlement) seem to have utilized the entire county as did preceding cultures, although for some reason they did not grow crops.

Historically, Box Elder County was the scene for some significant events in American history. Early fur trappers were the first white men in the area. They were followed by emigrants on their way to the Pacific Coast. Part of the California Trail (which split from the Oregon Trail at Fort Hall) passes through the northwest part of the county. Segments of the old trail can still be seen.

*Promontory Summit* \*

The greatest happening, however, was the completion of the first transcontinental railroad at Promontory Point in 1869. The activity brought by construction of the railroad resulted in much of the settlement of the Park Valley area. The railroad opened up the western frontier to settlement. Many of the ruins of towns along the railroad are still visible, as are good examples of construction (trestles and culverts) along the abandoned grade.

### Forest Resources

Forest resources in Box Elder County are comprised of timber species such as subalpine fir, Douglas fir, Engelman spruce, and aspen on approximately 1,804 acres and pinyon/juniper on 122,077 acres. Timber stands are isolated, generally occurring in steep canyons with limited access. Due to limited quantity and access and a nonexistent local saw log market, the only practical uses include firewood and Christmas trees. Pinyon pine is found on a total of 20,825 acres in only three areas in Box Elder County: Raft River, Emigrant Pass, and the Pilot Mountain Range. Uses have traditionally been pine nuts, firewood and Christmas trees. Juniper occurs on 94,252 acres and an additional 27,825 acres in association with pinyon pine. Juniper has been used for posts and firewood.

### Fire Management

Fire occurrence on public lands in Box Elder County since 1973 has varied from 1 to 14 fires per year, with an average of 5.6 fires annually. Because area residents are reluctant to report fires, actual fire occurrence is probably greater. However, average size is probably not greater, as the unreported fires are usually Class A and B. Fires on public lands in the county range in size from less than 1 acre to over 14,000 acres (Class G),

averaging 251 acres per fire. These fires have burned an average total of 4,200 acres each year. The majority of the large fires (Class D+) have occurred between the Kelton Road and Promontory Point. A total of 111,998 acres have burned in Box Elder County, of which 42 percent or 46,600 acres have burned on public lands.

Fire management techniques employed in Box Elder County have primarily consisted of immediate maximum suppression. The county is divided into three areas of initial attack and/or suppression responsibilities as follows:

Utah State Lands and Forestry - east of Highway 30 and the Kelton Road,

Burley District BLM - north of Highway 30,

Salt Lake District BLM - south of Highway 30 and west of the Kelton Road.

In recent years, prescribed burning in the county has been limited to one fire in 1979 treating 300 acres and one fire in 1981 treating an additional 150 acres in the same location. Regeneration of preferred wildlife and livestock plant species has been excellent. Seventy-five acres were reseeded in 1981; success has been fair to moderate to date. Recent wildfires in the Snowville Allotment have been reseeded.

### Socioeconomics

#### Introduction

The public lands in Box Elder County add value to the regional economy through in-lieu-of-tax payments, recreation-related expenditures, forest products, minerals production, and grazing fees and other ranching related factors. In-lieu payments made to Box Elder County amounted to \$746,666 in 1983. The value of recreation activities can only be inferred since there are many forms and considerable expenditures are made, but they are not identifiable as such. However, hunting for deer, antelope, chukar, sage grouse and rabbits is a popular recreation activity in the planning area. Hunting produced expenditures of \$2,400,000 in western Box Elder County from all lands in 1983. What portion of this amount could be attributed to hunting on public lands has not been determined. The value of forest products and minerals removed from public lands is low at the present time.

Livestock grazing fees for 1983 came to \$52,436, of which about \$25,000 probably entered the regional

## Response to Letter 1

1.5 This change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 99.)

*Promontory Point is 30 miles south (the Promontory Summit is the last road).*



## Comment Letter 2



4613 South 4000 West  
P.O. Box 20222  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84120  
Phone 968-3548

April 26, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks, Box Elder RMP Team Leader  
U. S. Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Bureau's Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and E.I.S.. After reviewing the document, the Society believes it can support the Bureau's decision to choose Alternative 2 as its "preferred alternative".

Alternative 2 appears to be a balanced choice between Alternatives number 3 and 4, both of which swing the balance far in favor of either wildlife or livestock, respectively. The 4,975 acres of land which would be placed into the disposal category in Alternative 2 would certainly be lost as wildlife habitat, although the amount of property amounts to less than .5% of the total land area under consideration.

2.1 As always, the Society is concerned over the huge numbers of "non-game" species which are dismissed as not being "most directly affected by the Box Elder RMP". These animal species comprise a very large segment of the animal populations throughout the area and will be directly affected by any loss or change of habitats. Their constant lack of consideration in Utah's E.I.S. documents constitutes a very shortsighted approach to the potential for damage or alterations in their environments. While it can be argued that these species do not appear very important because of their lack of interest to the sportsmen, this group of animals comprises a very significant population to non-sportsmen and animal fanciers. We feel that the effects of the various Alternatives on these populations should be discussed so that they can be taken into account when deciding the benefits or liabilities of each proposal.

2.2 The Society also feels that Alternative 2 would benefit greatly if some of the Riparian Habitat improvements mentioned in Alternative 3 were incorporated into it. The benefits of this type of habitat were very clearly described in Chapter 3 - Affected Environment and

**DEDICATED TO THE ELIMINATION OF FEAR, PAIN AND SUFFERING OF ALL ANIMALS**  
Gifts and Bequests to the Society are deductible for income and estate tax purposes.

## Response to Letter 2

2.1 BLM recognizes the large number of non-game species and populations present within the planning area. It is also recognized that habitat loss or alteration will affect these animals. However, the EIS only analyzed the major species or species groups. "Sensitive" non-game species were individually considered. Other non-game species were not specifically mentioned in the EIS based on the fact that this "group" is so diverse and widespread that analysis needs to be more site specific. BLM will consider all affected wildlife prior to on-the-ground actions. These actions will be individually and more intensely evaluated by an environmental assessment (EA) prior to the action being taken. Based on the EA, a decision will be made that best follows multiple-use management and serves the public interest.

2.2 Air, Soils, and Water Proposed Decision 5 sets forth management objectives for riparian areas. Subsequent improvements or protection will be designed and implemented in Habitat Management Plans (HMPs), Allotment Management Plans (AMPs), Multiple Use Management Plans (MUMPs), or watershed plans.

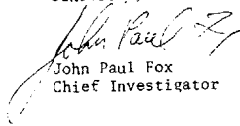
## Comment Letter 2

April 26, 1985  
Mr. Dennis Oaks, Box Elder RMP Team Leader  
Page 2

warrant further consideration as an addition to Alternative 2 features.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review this Draft and comment on its contents.

Sincerely,

  
John Paul Fox  
Chief Investigator

### Comment Letter 3



IN REPLY REFER TO

#### United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ENDANGERED SPECIES OFFICE  
2078 ADMINISTRATION BLDG.  
1745 WEST 1700 SOUTH  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84104

May 28, 1985

#### MEMORANDUM

TO: Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader,  
Bureau of Land Management, Salt Lake City, Utah

FROM: Field Supervisor, Endangered Species Office,  
Fish and Wildlife Service, Salt Lake City, Utah

SUBJECT: Box Elder Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement  
(RMP/EIS)

We have reviewed the subject RMP/EIS and commend your efforts to protect habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout (Salmo clarki henshawi) under alternatives 2 and 3. We have concluded that the plan itself would have no effect on endangered species. However, as elements of the plan are implemented, the Bureau of Land Management is required to consult with this office on any action which may affect threatened or endangered species.

If you have questions or need additional information feel free to call this office at 524-4430 (FTS 588-4430).

*Robert G. Ruesink*  
Robert G. Ruesink

### Response to Letter 3

No response required.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

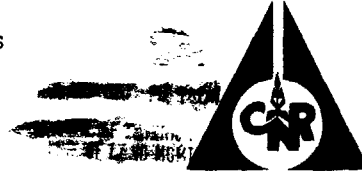
## Comment Letter 4

COLLEGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

UMC 52

Utah State University

Logan, Utah 84322



DEPARTMENT OF  
RANGE SCIENCE  
801-750-2471

Mr. Dennis Oaks, Team Leader  
Salt Lake District Office  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

I have read the draft of the Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement and am concerned with the following statement.

- 4.1 On page 3, bottom paragraph of the first column, you state that "No environmental consequences would occur to lands as a result of any of the alternatives." I beg to differ with you on this point.

- 4.2 Under Alternatives 3 and 4, there would apparently be no fire management plan written since it is mentioned only under Alternative 2. I perceive that there are grave environmental consequences of not planning for fire and subsequent rehabilitation. This is because wildfires are causing rapid deterioration of a considerable part of the land under consideration. When the perennials are lost from wildfire, annuals voluntarily move in and then the land is greatly susceptible to subsequent reburning and soil erosion. Lack of speedy rehabilitation after these wildfires leads to poor establishment of seeded perennials. A descending spiral of degradation can occur because if convectional storms occur in mid-summer before the annuals start to grow, there is rapid loss of the surface soil which is highest in organic matter and nutrients. The annuals, once established, do provide a good cover against soil erosion, however, their protein levels are adequate for a much shorter time than for the native perennials. Thus, the quality of the plant production that occurs is very seasonal.

- 4.3 I believe that the BLM needs to promptly reseed lands burned by wildfires with improved perennials. In addition to slowing accelerated wind and water erosion, seedings would maintain the grazing capacity of these lands, and regrow forages which have a high nutrient quality over a greater part of the year than the annuals. These phenomena are explained in more detail in the following publication.

West, N. E. 1983. Great Basin-Colorado Plateau Sagebrush Semi-desert. pp. 331-349 in N. E. West (ed.). Temperate Deserts and Semi-deserts, Vol. 5. Ecosystems of the World. Elsevier Sci. Publ., Amsterdam

## Response to Letter 4

- 4.1 The statement you refer to on the bottom of the first column on page 3 in the Draft RMP refers to land actions in BLM's Lands and Realty Program. A change has been made to clarify this point. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 3.)

- 4.2 Under Alternatives 3 and 4, current fire suppression and management practices would continue. Under the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2), a fire suppression and management plan would be designed and implemented. We concur with the remainder of your comments in the second paragraph of your letter.

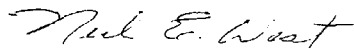
- 4.3 We concur with your statement in the third paragraph of your comment letter. The BLM makes every effort to implement prompt rehabilitation efforts following a fire in those areas with moderate to high resource potential.

## Comment Letter 4

Mr. Dennis Oaks, Team Leader  
Page 2  
May 10, 1985

I would hope you would address the above issues more substantively in the final version of the EIS.

Sincerely yours,



Neil E. West  
Professor

NEW:ja

## Comment Letter 5



### United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
UPPER COLORADO REGIONAL OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 11566  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84147

IN REPLY  
REFER TO: UC-151  
120.1

JUN 4 1985

#### Memorandum

To: Mr. Dennis Oaks, Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader, Bureau of Land Management, 2370 South 2300 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

From: Regional Director  
Bureau of Reclamation

Subject: Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

We have reviewed the subject document and conclude that implementation of the management plan would not have any effect on any projects under our jurisdiction.

The land area involved lies within the boundaries of the Wasatch Front Total Water Management Study. However, there is no direct relationship between the two planning efforts. We are consulting with BLM in the data collection phase of our study.

## Response to Letter 5

No response required.

## Comment Letter 6



### United States Department of the Interior

#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

GOLDEN SPIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE  
P.O. BOX 4  
BRIGHAM CITY, UT 84302

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L32

May 31, 1985

Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks,

After the meeting in Brigham City held at the Box Elder County Court-house on May 30, 1985, concerning the future management of the Central Pacific Railroad Grade in Box Elder County, we would like to submit the following observations, recommendations and assistance.

These comments are in addition to those corrections we sent to you in a memorandum dated April 24, 1985.

#### Existing Conditions

1. As far as we can tell, the CPRR railroad grade is suffering little natural erosion.
2. Present adverse ORV use is minimal.
3. Isolation of the grade is perhaps it's greatest protecting factor.

#### Recommendations

1. We strongly endorse all five proposed management actions as spelled out on page 45 of the RMP for alternative 2. In addition, we recommend that National Register nomination process should be initiated immediately.
2. The railroad grade deserves protection from man-caused adverse use and should be allowed to "mellow away" through benign neglect over the next several hundred years. To provide this protection, the RME needs to address how indiscriminate ORV use will be controlled/prevented.
3. The townsites of Kelton and Terrace deserve special attention and protection to safeguard the very significant surface remains of the historic railroad operations found in those two locations.

6.1

## Response to Letter 6

6.1 See Response to Comment 1.3.

## Comment Letter 6

4. Because of the attention this plan will draw to the railroad grade, some form of signing and/or selfguided literature needs to be developed. Golden Spike National Historic Site would be pleased to be a distribution point for such literature.


### Assistance

1. I and members of my staff would be pleased to serve on a committee to develop long range plans for the railroad grade.
2. We would also be pleased to offer the interpretive expertise of our staff in the development of interpretive material for use on RIM land.
3. Our considerable library and historic photos are available and can be used as resources in the planning process.

### Conclusion

We at Golden Spike are pleased to see the initiatives begun in this planning process. We look forward to joining with you in cooperative efforts to preserve and interpret this very significant section of the nation's first transcontinental railroad.

Sincerely,

  
Denny Davies  
Superintendent



## Comment Letter 7

**STUART P. HUGHES**

GEOLOGICAL CONSULTANT

13489 W. WARREN AVE. • LAKEWOOD, COLORADO 80228

Phone (303) 989-7879

June 8, 1984

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

This is the Minerals Exploration Coalition and my response to the draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The Minerals Exploration Coalition is composed of companies and individuals interested in mineral exploration on public lands.

The document lists some known areas where minerals have occurred and proposed withdrawals which may effect mining. However to manage minerals, this is a resource management plan as well as a DEIS, it is necessary to identify areas with mineral potential even though the minerals have yet to be found. Evaluating the mineral potential of an area allows the manager determine the trade offs between mineral and other resources. These trade offs are the basis of land-use planning. This principal is accepted accepted on page 11 left column: where the first item of " needed decisions include: Which areas should be open for mineral exploration and development". Closing areas to mining without evaluating the mineral potential against the resource for which the closure is to be made is not rationally managing the land.

7.1

The document does not provide any geologic data or other information for evaluating the mineral potential of the plan area where locatable mineral occurrences are not already known. Area evaluations can be made by comparing the geologic conditions to mineral occurrence models. Several of these models have been developed in the BLM Denver Service Center by Don Fisher and others can be found in the literature, notably by the USGS. Without the necessary geologic background described in the plan-statement the reviewer has not been able to evaluate the entire area of interest. A section on the geology of the area must be included.

REGISTERED GEOLOGIST  
CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGIST

## Response to Letter 7

7.1

Specific information for establishing mineral potential is considered background information and is therefore not included in the RMP. This information is available in the planning-support document titled the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) and in other BLM data such as minerals maps.

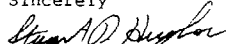
## Comment Letter 7

7.2

The following are some additional comments from me and do not necessarily reflect the position of MEC. The addition of a geologic section would also help to evaluate the groundwater and paleontologic resources potential of the plan-statement area. Paleontologic specimens may easily be a reason for identifying an ACEC and groundwater is likely to be, if it is not already the most valuable resource in the arid west.

Thank you for allowing MEC and me the opportunity for commenting on the Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely

  
Stuart P. Hughes

C.C. John D. Wells  
President, MEC  
P.O. Box 15638  
Denver, CO 80215

## Response to Letter 7

7.2

Although the RMP contains no section on geology from which an evaluation of groundwater potential and paleontologic resources potential can be made, geologic data for such evaluations is available in publications and maps in the Salt Lake District and in the Utah State Office of BLM. Extensive groundwater data is available in the District library, including: Utah Department of Natural Resources technical publications (numbers 25, 29, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44 and 45 deal with the hydrology of the planning area); annual cooperative investigations by the Utah Division of Water Resources and the U.S. Geological Survey entitled "Groundwater Condition in Utah, Spring of \_\_\_\_\_" (year of data collection); and other publications. The District also has some unpublished data such as well samplings that will add further knowledge of groundwater in the planning area when fully interpreted. No paleontological resources of sufficient uniqueness, rarity, or national value to meet the criteria for an ACEC are known within the planning area.

## Comment Letter 8



UTAH  
WILDLIFE  
FEDERATION

POST  
OFFICE  
BOX 15636

SALT LAKE  
CITY, UTAH  
84115

June 13, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

The following represents comments of the Public Lands Committee of the Utah Wildlife Federation for the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Our comments are purposely brief, yet hopefully concise and specific to our concerns.

The Utah Wildlife Federation is the largest and one of the oldest statewide citizen organizations devoted to conservation of all natural resources, outdoor recreation and quality environment for all citizens of Utah. Naturally then, it follows that our preference among the four alternatives displayed is for alternative three. This alternative appears to be the "EQ" or environmental quality alternative, providing the greatest protection or enhancement of environmental values. Actually, we believe there are a myriad of alternatives and would prefer one falling between the extremities of alternatives two and three.

For example, our preferred alternative three emphasizes total retention of public lands, whereas we believe there are tracts of land with characteristics of isolation, size, high management costs, etc., which should be exchanged. Likewise, we are strong advocates for improved access to our public lands, which is not provided for in alternative three.

Utilization of the range resources would appear to have the most potential for controversy. The Federation would like to emphasize that one of its strong objectives is to strengthen the farmer - stockman - sportsman relationships. We concur with the BLM that improved livestock management, changes in use, and better access when combined with the range improvements planned to benefit wildlife will increase forage production, improve soil stability, reduce erosion rates and increase the range resource capability for both domestic livestock and wildlife.

DEDICATED TO THE CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

## Response to Letter 8

No response required.

### Comment Letter 8

Domestic livestock use would increase 16% above present use and wildlife AUM's would increase 13%.

We applaud and support the efforts of the UDWR and BLM for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep and elk into the Box Elder Unit, and support increased numbers of antelope as proposed. The benefits of this program are manifold, promoting greater outdoor recreation opportunities with its economic benefit to a portion of the State in need of such benefits.

Alternative three has such overwhelming positive benefits that we wonder how any other alternative could be selected. Among the obvious already listed are: improved soil stability, reduced erosion, improved watershed conditions, increased forage production, increased AUM's for both domestic livestock and wildlife, increased outdoor recreation activity, increased hunter expenditures, improved economic conditions, reduced hazards of man-caused fires, improved range and wildlife habitat conditions, and last, but certainly among the most important, an improved economic lifestyle for the local citizenry through management emphasizing environmental concern.

The Utah Wildlife Federation recommends the consideration of Alternative three with modifications providing for land disposal and access acquisition as the favored and recommended resource management plan for the Box Elder Unit of the Salt Lake District.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this important area and commend your staff for a thorough analysis and resource planning job.

Sincerely yours,

*Marvin H. Combs*

Marvin H. Combs  
Public Lands Committee  
Utah Wildlife Federation

## Comment Letter 9



721 Second Avenue  
Salt Lake City  
Utah 84103

11 July 1985

Mr Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City  
Utah 84119

Concerning the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement:

The description of the environment, the numerous ecosystems, and the strong description of the riparian habitat were excellent. This is important in an analysis because it lets the reader know that the Bureau of Land Management knows the lands it manages.

9.1

There are some general concerns involving Pilot and Newfoundland mountains. Transplanting big horn sheep into the Pilot Mountains is very premature and should depend upon what residential housing developments in these regions will occur. Both the Utah and Nevada side of the Pilot Peak will be vulnerable as long as the urban center of Wendover is expanding.

9.2

Transplanting big horn sheep on the Newfoundland Mountains is likewise very questionable. The impacts on big horn sheep on the riparian zone in the northern Newfoundland mountains should be addressed. Furthermore the transplanting of big horn sheep in the Newfoundland Mountains should not occur until clarification of public access to these mountains is made (or would the transplant be only for Southern Pacific employees?).

For both the Pilot Range and the Newfoundland Mountains, off-road vehicle restrictions should confine vehicular travel to existing ways and roads. The preferred alternative (#2) would be more balanced by having greater limitations of the ORV in Pilot and Newfoundland Mountains. Likewise the critical wildlife habitat should be limited or closed to ORV in the preferred alternative, if indeed a balanced multiple use is to be attained.

9.3

Although the Pilot Mountains has been proposed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in the preferred alternative(#2), no ACEC were proposed for alternative #3 (protection and enhancement of environmental values). It seems that all ACEC's that were examined in the Resource Management Plan should be listed in Alternative #3. Besides this, the Newfoundland Mountains should be considered for ACEC in Alternative #2, the preferred alternative. The geology of the region is interesting and the granitic formations in the northern portion have comparable value to the

## Response to Letter 9

9.1

BLM recognizes the potential for increased urbanization in the Pilot Mountain area. However, urban development in this area is not expected to be sufficiently intense in the foreseeable future to hinder the bighorn sheep reintroduction. The mountain range is large, rugged and fairly inaccessible by vehicle.

In 1979 the Pilot Mountain HMP was completed and signed. This document evaluated the suitability of the area for bighorn sheep habitat and determined that the mountain range has suitable habitat for up to 60 animals. Urbanization, or other changes since 1979, are not viewed as being sufficiently intense to reduce the habitat suitability on the mountain range.

9.2

The Newfoundland Mountain bighorn sheep reintroduction is not planned for the near future. Prior to this transplant, the current domestic sheep permit would have to voluntarily be given up or converted to cattle, and an HMP and associated cooperative transplant agreement completed. This HMP would evaluate and plan for all wildlife and wildlife habitat needs for the public land portion of the mountain. Public access and the protection of the riparian habitat would be dealt with in this plan.

9.3

The criteria upon which ACEC designation is based were applied to the Newfoundland Mountains. The result of the analysis was that the Newfoundland Mountains, while having several features that are important, do not warrant ACEC designation. Several proposals in the RMP deal with caring for those features. They include ORV designations, fluid mineral leasing categories, VRM classification and management of livestock grazing.

## Comment Letter 9

-2-

- 65
- 9.3 and water effects on the sandstone of the Colorado Plateau with a multitude of windows, arches, and other unique formations. Newfoundland Mountains are mostly surrounded by salt (mud) flats and hence can be considered a biological island. Migratory birds certainly note this in the spring and autumn when large flocks land and feed. The spring of 1985 had numerous Chipping Sparrows (perhaps thousands) feeding in the greasewood-shadscale zone. The riparian habitat extends for over two miles (see enclosed map). Although this riparian zone may shrink during the summer, the vegetation indicates that the underground system flows most of the year. The absence of mollusks and amphibians from these wetlands indicates ephemeral flows or isolation from adjacent ranges both during Lake Bonneville times or the subsequent desiccated era. Thus Newfoundland Mountains have important scientific values and biological and geological values to be included in an ACEC. Access to the range is not important for the protection and management of these values. However, the numerous ORV tracks in the northern portion indicate that protection of some kind is necessary.
- 9.4 The Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade is certainly a unique feature of the Resource Management Area. Page 45 states that the BLM should prepare a protection plan which would not encourage development or recreational use of the grade. Perhaps the BLM should elaborate in the Management Plan its intentions. Over the years the bridges have deteriorated- perhaps due to recreational use of the grade and by souvenir hunters. However driving on the grade is an experience of history. Perhaps those days are over or perhaps those days will be highly regulated. The Plan should certainly elaborate on the protection aspects and the Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade should be protected and preserved!
- 9.5 Spring manipulations should be carefully planned. The springs in the Newfoundland Mountains might serve as a model- the pipe being planted at the lower end of the springs-riparian zone with the upper end being maintained rather natural. This compares to South Patterson Spring (B 5-19) 36ac (although it appears on State Section 36, the Hydrological report indicated that the Spring belongs to the BLM) where the spring is fenced off and piped to a CCC constructed reservoir. Although this is a partially good management system, the lower wetlands should be fenced off from cattle like the spring source and let the over flow or the very distal region be accessible for cattle. Presently the spring flow is bypassing the pipe and the cattle have destroyed the water-cress region in the CCC constructed reservoir. Spring manipulations should always maintain some of the original wetlands for preservation of relict populations of crustaceans, mollusks and other invertebrates. Does the BLM have a map with the 208 springs on public lands (page 82) and a listing of the springs?
- 9.6 Public access to the Raft Mountains from Utah side should be encouraged.
- 9.7 Cattle grazing should not be allowed in spring and summer on the desert ranges. The cattle trample the wetlands and riparian zones needlessly. If the desert ranges are to be utilized by cattle, then the wetlands, springs, and riparian zones should be fenced and water should be brought to the cattle.
- 9.8 Noxious weeds (page 74) include many native plants (death camas, larkspur, lupine, horsebrush). It seems that the Bureau of Land Management should concentrate on some of the exotic species including cheat grass. The first efforts to improve the range should be the large acres of cheat grass- a public danger in summer because of its inflammable nature, and a grass that has no value for wildlife in summer and autumn and winter.

## Response to Letter 9

- 9.4 A proposed decision to prepare a management plan for the grade is included in the RMP. The plan would consider protection and preservation needs. (See Proposed Decision 1 for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.)
- 9.5 BLM agrees that spring manipulation should be carefully planned. However, specific manipulations occur at the activity planning level. BLM's stipulations and specifications that are to be followed in activity planning minimize impacts to springs. BLM has mapped many of the 208 springs found on public land and has a complete listing of springs.
- 9.6 There is no continuous block of public land on the south slope of the Raft River Mountains over which public access to the Raft River Mountains may be provided. Condemnation of private lands for public access roads is not considered a reasonable solution to providing such access.
- 9.7 It is uncertain what is meant by the term "desert ranges." If the term applies to the desert shrub community, it should be noted that most of these areas are grazed primarily in the late fall and/or through the winter months. In those areas where livestock have access to the desert shrub community, every effort has been made in the past to eliminate unnecessary impact during the spring and summer.
- If the term refers to the desert mountain ranges found in the county, it should be understood that some of these ranges have excellent summer range potential and are utilized in this manner. Use at any other time of the year would be both impractical and probably detrimental to preferred plant species.
- In either case, your point about preventing unnecessary impact to wetlands and riparian areas is important. Protection of these areas has always been dependent on funding. Specific protection measures for wetland and riparian areas will be developed and implemented in conjunction with HMPs and other activity plans.
- 9.8 Noxious weeds include many natives. BLM policy is to treat those plants identified by BLM and the State of Utah that pose a threat to any resource. The BLM will continue to cooperate with the county government in their treatment program, which due to funding has

## Comment Letter 9

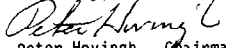
-3-

9.9

With the great invasion of grasshoppers in the summer of 1985 it seems that there is a \$10,000,000 program for spraying the grasshoppers. Although such programs are usually worthless in controlling certain aspects of nature and are usually accomplished for political reasons and not resource reasons, it seems a crime that the Bureau of Land Management could not have a sound research effort going with a budget of some \$100,000 per year for the various Districts. This research could study the insects on the ranges and the rodents on the ranges and the ecology of insects, rodents and native plants and animals. Should a spraying program be instituted, then the research should be to monitor the effect on nesting birds, rodents, other insects, and plants. At least in this manner the BLM might have some sound data and save the taxpayers much money in the long run.

Thus Utah Nature Study Society recommends that the Preferred Alternative should include more restrictions on travel by recreationists and more protection for the Newfoundland Mountains. Plans to transplant bighorn sheep should be carefully considered in both the Pilot and Newfoundland Mountains. Protection of the riparian zones, springs, and wetlands should continue to have high priority.

Sincerely,

  
Peter Hovingh, Chairman  
Issues Committee  
Utah Nature Study Society

## Response to Letter 9

always been limited to rights-of-way along public roads. The danger of cheatgrass has been discussed throughout the analysis portion of the Draft RMP. Through fire-rehabilitation efforts and rangeland improvement projects, BLM is attempting to reclaim these areas. This effort is limited by site production potential and funding.

9.9

BLM did not fund any of the program for spraying grasshoppers. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) was responsible for funding and implementing this program in Utah. In cooperation with Utah State University personnel the BLM is gathering limited amounts of information on the Black grassbug (*Labops* spp.) infestation in crested wheatgrass and currently on the effects of an unknown insect which is apparently killing sagebrush.

## Comment Letter 10



Soil Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 11350  
Salt Lake City, Utah

July 10, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the preliminary Box Elder Management Plan. The following are our comments:

- 10.1 1. Page 1, third paragraph, line four, "16536 AUM's for wildlife" should read "16356 AUM's for wildlife".
- 10.2 2. Page 74, left column, Poisonous Plants and Noxious Weeds, Milk vetch should be Milk vetch.
- 10.3 3. Page 75, Desert Shrub/Saltbush vegetation, Salina wildrye should be deleted and replaced by Salmon wildrye/Elymus ambiguus var. salmonis. Spike fescue/Leucopogon juncea should be Leucopogon juncea.
- 10.4 4. Page 112, left column, third paragraph, first sentence, misspelled allotments.
- 10.5 5. Page 127, right column, second paragraph, misspelled practices.
- 10.6 6. The production costs in Appendix 10 appear to be low.

I appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS.

*Francis T. Holt*

FRANCIS T. HOLT  
State Conservationist

cc: George C. Bluhm, Director, SCS, Portland, OR

## Response to Letter 10

- 10.1 Forage distribution for wildlife is 16,536 AUMs. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 1.)
- 10.2 The change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 74.)
- 10.3 Both changes have been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 75.)
- 10.4 The change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 112.)
- 10.5 The change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 127.)
- 10.6 As noted in the footnotes, the costs were determined for each budget on an individual basis from interviews where possible. This data was then averaged, and where necessary augmented with data from other sources, Davis and Wheeler for example. More detailed information on the budgets is available at the Salt Lake District Office.



## Comment Letter 11



Bald Eagle Mountain, Nevada

July 12, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84113

Reference: Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan  
and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mister Oaks:

I would like to commend you and your team for your efforts to explore and present possible solutions to the many problems presenting themselves to the preservation and management of the resources on our public lands.

I respectfully submit the following comments on the proposed Box Elder RMP & EIS. These comments are limited to the Lucin-Pilot Grazing Allotment, since that is the area that I am directly involved with as a permittee, and I do not believe I am qualified to present any comment on the other areas, except perhaps in a general manner.

I, for the most part, support the concepts outlined in Alternative 2 with some exceptions.

11.1

#1. I support the proposed establishment of the ACEC's and VRM Class 11 for the Pilot mountains. If the Pilot Mountains are redesignated, then the proposed ORV use as designated in Figure 2-5 should be changed to limit off-road travel to existing roads and trails. Such limitations would:

- A. decrease the incidence of fires.
- B. help preserve forage for livestock and wildlife use
- C. reduce erosion and littering.

I further believe that the proposed Fluid Mineral Leasing Categories for this area should be redesignated to Category 3-no surface occupancy, for the same reasons outlined above.

#2. I fully support the division of the Lucin-Pilot Allotment into two or more allotments defined by season of use and/or permittee. This would allow greater efficiency in grazing use, herd distribution and control, and allow both the BLM and the permittees involved to better develop AMP's which would in turn facilitate more efficient management of the range and the herds.

11.2

I further believe that the season of use change, showing a spring turn-out date of 05/01, outlined in Appendix-4 for the Lucin-Pilot Allotment would not be in the best interest of the permittees, nor would it be necessary if the allotment is divided and the herds kept in those areas where early damage will not occur. Therefore, I propose that the spring turn-out date remain at 05/01.

## Response to Letter 11

Mail  
P.O.  
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898

11.1

The proposed ACEC designation for the Pilot Mountains has been modified to include only the watersheds of Donner and Bettridge Creeks. (See Proposed ACEC Decision 2.) ORV use would be limited to designated roads and fluid mineral leasing Category 3 would be applied to the proposed ACEC. These designations would not be warranted in the remainder of the Pilot Mountain Area. As stated in the proposed decision for the Visual Resource Management Program, a new inventory of visual resources resulted in the Pilot Mountains being reclassified to VRM Class III.

11.2

Proposed season-of-use for Lucin-Pilot Allotment is found in Proposed Range Decision 5 and Table 4. The Proposed Decision would leave the season-of-use as currently assigned until an Allotment Management Plan (AMP) is signed. At that time, it may be determined that the season-of-use should be adjusted to prevent long-term damage to the vegetation resource.

## Comment Letter 11

Lastly, I would like to express my view that as a general policy, I believe that the environment should be protected in as many ways as possible. The establishment of roads, power lines, fire trails, and other surface disturbances should be eliminated or kept to an absolute minimum. The cutting of forests of any species, should not be allowed nor should the land for the most part be cleared by fire, chaining or spraying. Where fire is being suppressed every effort should be made to control it without disturbing the lands by cutting fire trails that remain a part of the land for a lifetime. In short, leave the land as we find it as much as possible. We have already left too many marks on it!

Yours Respectfully and Sincerely;

  
Joseph R. Payne

## Comment Letter 12

### TRUE OIL COMPANY

RIVER CROSS ROAD

July 10, 1985

CASPER, WYOMING  
P.O. DRAWER 2360  
PHONE 237-9301  
82602

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder RMP Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

Dear Mr. Oaks:

The following are our comments concerning the Box Elder Resource Area Draft Resource Management Plan/EIS.

12.1 We are totally opposed to the two mile radius surrounding sage grouse strutting grounds. We have been through this same proposal in the state of Wyoming and it has been found that a 500 foot radius is sufficient to protect the sage grouse strutting grounds. According to published studies, grouse populations are more dependent on habitat than the activity near them. Additionally, the decrease in sage grouse population are more directly related to efforts to convert sage brush range to grass land and are not an adverse effect of oil and gas operations. If BLM is serious about increasing the sage grouse populations in certain areas, then the Bureau should reestablish sage brush range rather than apply severe restrictions on oil and gas lease holders. The two mile radius buffer zone is absolutely ridiculous since the grouse are not seriously affected during the strutting period in other locations which are subjected to extensive human activity -- for example, Jackson Hole, Wyoming holds tours for people to view the strutting grouse at the Jackson, Wyoming airport and people in the Casper, Wyoming area also go out on the Hat Six Road to watch the grouse strut each year.

It is therefore strongly recommended the BLM modify the buffer zone from two miles down to a 500 foot radius -- and 500 feet is probably not even required.

12.2 BLM should identify what trade-off decisions were made under each alternative. For example, the weight given to surface versus subsurface resources and their uses should be pointed out very clearly and completely. Environmental Consequences section of the Box Elder planning document addresses these decisions, but we wonder whether it is comprehensive enough for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act requirements. It is suggested that the Box Elder planning team review Colorado BLM's Grand Junction plan which provides an extensive evaluation of the trade-offs between resources. We believe by using the Grand Junction Plan as a guide, the Box Elder Plan would be enhanced in this area.

We support the Bureau's new Fluid Mineral Leasing Guidelines. Their use provides industry and the public with relatively site-specific information regarding how the resource area is to be leased and where it will be leased. We fully support the inclusion of a map delineating these lease category areas by alternative.

## Response to Letter 12

12.1 BLM has adopted the "Guidelines for Maintenance of Sage Grouse Habitat" by Clair E. Braun, et al., published in The Wildlife Society Bulletin Volume 5 No. 3, Fall 1977, as guidelines for protecting sage grouse habitat on public land. This document suggests protecting habitat within 3 kilometers of active strutting grounds (leks), with some flexibility based upon sound biological opinion.

It is true that some grouse have become habituated to human activity and do not seem to be bothered by activities close to the strutting ground. On the other hand, some leks will be totally vacated for an entire morning if humans drive to within 3/8 to 1/4 mile of the area. Other leks may have strutting males in conjunction with human activity, but the females are inhibited and do not visit the lek.

The restriction for sage grouse within the planning area is for the period from March 15 through June 15. The buffer zone has been reduced from a 2-mile radius to a 0.5-mile radius. A 500-foot radius would be considered inadequate to protect the reproduction of this important species.

12.2 The Proposed Box Elder RMP/Final EIS will reflect current BLM policy to make as much land as possible available for mineral leasing and development while protecting important resource values. Consideration of these other values has resulted in approximately 1 percent of the planning area being withdrawn from mineral entry or categorized as no surface occupancy for fluid minerals activities. No public land would be closed to fluid mineral leasing. Resource trade-offs on those lands have been identified and analyzed at an appropriate level of detail to support proposed decisions and to meet the requirements of NEPA.

## Comment Letter 12

Page 2  
Letter to Mr. Dennis Oaks  
July 11, 1985

We also agree with BLM's decision under the Preferred Alternative to open 33,506 acres now closed to leasing. We believe that leasing the subsequent exploration and development activities in these mountain ranges can be accommodated through mitigation and careful planning of activities.

Sincerely,



Robert O. Byron  
Administrative Assistant to  
H. A. True, Jr.

ROB/dc

## Response to Letter 13

## Comment Letter 13

# The Nature Conservancy

Utah Public Lands Protection Planning  
2225 South Highway 89-91  
Wellsville, Utah 84339  
(801) 752-4154

July 16, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The Nature Conservancy's sole objective is the preservation of natural diversity. That is, we seek to maintain certain undisturbed ecosystems, and populations of rare plants and animals. Therefore, the following comments will deal only with aspects of the Plan which involve these conservation issues.

The proposed Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in the Pilot Mountains appears to be relevant and important for the reasons you have listed on page 38. We especially support this proposal for the protection it could give to important natural systems, which in certain locations are pristine. We also favor the additional protection that ACEC status could provide for the Lahontan cutthroat trout, officially listed as Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

13.1

We recommend that you designate this ACEC in the Pilot Mountains. We further recommend that several management decisions accompany this designation in the RMP, in order to protect the area's natural values. First, Fluid Mineral Leasing Category 3 (No Surface Occupancy) should be applied on the Pilot Mountains, as shown in Alternative 3 (page 49). Second, Off-Road Vehicle Designations should be applied on the Pilot Mountains, as shown in Alternative 3 (page 51), which limit or close travel on public lands there. This area should also be identified as an avoidance area for utility and transportation corridors, following your recommendation made on page 38. The Nature Conservancy would be glad to provide input to the Management Plan, including fire management, written for the Pilot Mountains ACEC if it is designated.

I was unable to personally visit the proposed Red Butte Mountain ACEC site, and cannot make a recommendation for or against ACEC designation at this time. The proposed Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade ACEC was not nominated for biological features, and is beyond the scope of our comments.

(p. 2)



National Office: 1800 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209

1001 Ridge Drive

13.1

As stated in Response 11.1, the Pilot Mountain ACEC proposal has been modified to include only the watersheds of Donner Creek and Bettridge Creek. This ACEC proposal would allow BLM to develop a comprehensive plan that would include protection measures for the Lahontan Cutthroat trout as well as measures to maintain the watersheds as sources of potable water. These measures include a Category 3 classification for fluid mineral leasing, a limited designation for off-road vehicles and designation as an avoidance area for rights-of-way. The remainder of the Pilots not included in the ACEC would continue to be managed under standard operating procedures and other management measures identified in the Proposed RMP.

## Comment Letter 13

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
July 16, 1985  
p. 2

13.2

We realize that this current RMP process is the most opportune time to propose and carry through on special designations such as ACEC's. However, we urge you not to consider the upcoming Plan as the final word on special designations in Box Elder County. As our information base becomes broader, we may discover other sites worthy of designation as ACEC's or as Research Natural Areas (RNA's). Should such areas come to our attention, we will analyze them, make proposals, and work cooperatively with you to ensure that important natural values are protected.

13.3

In anticipation of this, we request that you make an addition to Appendix 2. Under "Special Stipulations [for Oil and Gas] to be Applied at Time of Lease", we suggest a stipulation whose first two sentences would read:

"All or part of the land in this lease is included in an ecologically unique and special area. Therefore, no occupancy or disturbance of the surface of the land described below is authorized."

\* \* \*

The remainder of the comments will focus on protection, management and conservation of rare species.

Within the Draft RMP/EIS, statements which pertain to conservation of endangered, threatened, and sensitive species appear in Chapter 3 on the Affected Environment (pages 74, 94), and in Appendices 1 and 2 for Mitigating Measures. It seems that protection of rare species should have been mentioned under the "Features Common to All Alternatives" section of Chapter 2.

13.4

Within the Final RMP, therefore, policy statements regarding rare species protection should appear alongside policy statements for the various other BLM programs. Language regarding rare-species mitigating measures in the Appendices should also remain, with one addition. Under stipulation number 1 (page 130 in the Draft), the first sentence should read:

"All or part of the land in this lease is included in a critical area for threatened, endangered or sensitive species."

This addition would have the RMP follow BLM Guidelines to conserve sensitive species, as defined in Instruction Memorandum 85-229 from the Utah State Office.

13.5

Within Chapter 4 of the Draft RMP/EIS, there is no mention made of the consequences which the various alternatives may have on endangered,

p. 3

## Response to Letter 13

13.2

The RMP can be amended as necessary to keep up to date with new information and changing resource and user needs.

13.3

In applying special stipulations for fluid mineral leasing, we identified several specific resource values which could be considered "ecologically unique and special." Special stipulations have been applied to protect such values as crucial wildlife habitats, sensitive watersheds, important visual resources, threatened and endangered species, and historical resources. Because we have applied the stipulations to specific sensitive resources, an additional general stipulation for ecologically unique or special areas would not be needed.

13.4

BLM is mandated by laws and regulations to protect endangered, threatened and sensitive species and their habitats on public lands. This is non-discretionary and therefore no decision needs to be made on this subject. The subjects dealt with in the "Features Common to All Alternatives" section are those which require a decision and come into play regardless of which alternative is considered.

Sensitive species have been added to the stipulations for Category 3 Fluid Mineral Leasing. (See Proposed Decision 3 for Minerals.)

13.5

The protection of endangered, threatened and sensitive species and their habitat is mandated to BLM by laws and regulations. Therefore, no adverse impacts to these species are anticipated. This statement has been added as No. 7 under the "Analysis Assumptions" section of Chapter 4. (See revisions and corrections for page 103.)

## Comment Letter 13

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
July 16, 1985  
p. 3

13.5

threatened, or sensitive species. The Final RMP should discuss consequences of plan-implementation on such species. If there are no adverse consequences anticipated, then that should be stated.

We also have specific recommendations involving two rare species:

13.6

1. Our records show that Astragalus anserinus occurs on public land in northwestern Box Elder County. Field surveys by BLM personnel have confirmed these records, and have discovered several additional populations. Because so few locations are known for this plant, we recommend that it be maintained as a sensitive species.

13.7

2. Regardless of the outcome of the Pilot Mountains ADEC proposal, we recommend that restrictive designations for fluid minerals leasing, for ORV use, and for mineral withdrawal (all as found in Alternative 3) be applied to the habitat of the Lahontan cutthroat trout along Donner and Bettridge Creeks.

\* \* \*

This concludes our comments on the Box Elder Draft RMP/EIS. We appreciate the past cooperation we have received from the Bear River Resource Area and the Salt Lake District, and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely yours,

*Joel S. Tuhy*

Joel S. Tuhy  
Utah Public Lands  
Protection Planner

## Response to Letter 13

13.6

As you indicated in your comment letter, Astragalus anserinus has been found on public lands in western Box Elder County. In addition, several more additional sites may have been located. At this time these sites are not confirmed. Astragalus anserinus has not been identified as sensitive by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is doubtful that any proposed projects will adversely impact the plant. However, if it is within a proposed project area, the BLM intends to insure that adverse impacts do not occur to the plant or its preferred site.

13.7

The restrictions mentioned in this comment are found in the proposed decisions for minerals.

## Comment Letter 14

JoAnn K Tanner  
524 East 600 North  
Brigham City, Utah 84302

Dear Sirs;

I would like to make the following statement in regards to the Environmental Impact Study.

- 14.1 I have a few acres of range land on Pine Creek in the Grouse Creek Mountains which I inherited from my family and I intend to leave it for my children. This land is more important to us than it is to hunters or campers therefore, I am opposed to the access road. We already have a problem with trespassers leaving gates open and cutting the fences, and we feel this access would increase the existing problem. We do not have the time or the money to patrol the area.
- 14.2 Also, I am opposed to elk in the area. We have the feed we need for our few cattle and we do not wish to share it with elk.

Sincerely,



## Response to Letter 14

- 14.1 Generally, the reason the BLM attempts to gain an easement through private lands is to provide access to public lands for permittees, recreationists, other users and BLM employees. An easement through private lands does not grant users the right to trespass on surrounding private lands. However, if the BLM determines that obtaining an easement through private lands would adversely impact these lands, the project is dropped. Therefore, because the BLM is committed to the idea that management of public lands should not impact surrounding private lands, the easements identified in the Preferred Alternative have been dropped from the Proposed Plan.
- 14.2 The proposed decision concerning the elk transplant onto the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges is not to agree to the reintroduction. This is based upon the fact that public land is in the minority compared to the private land within the assumed elk use area and that local opposition has been expressed.



## Comment Letter 15

June 28

Dear Box Elder County Planners

After reviewing your draft plan for land use in Box Elder County, it is clear I favor Alternative 3 which would allow for maximum big game habitat retention and/or management. I feel this county needs to plan intensively for many uses as its population increases. However, industry and agriculture tends to look out for itself.

If wildlife is not directly managed for maximum yield, it is too often left behind in the shuffle. Resources for future population quality enjoyment won't happen by accident--only if you program for it. Hopefully, air and water quality, benefiting wildlife, fisheries, and people directly, will also be sensitively included in the planning. Of them all, I believe the mule deer and Pilot Mountain elk herds should be protected, expanded, and managed most wisely, particularly use and access to winter range. Thank you.

Sincerely



Hartt Wixon  
Cokeville, Wyo. 83114  
member, Utah Hunters Fed.

## Response to Letter 15

No response required.

## Comment Letter 16

UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION - Public Lands Committee  
316 W. 700 N./Brigham City, UT 84302 (801) 257-7476

July 12, 1995

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2500 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Dennis:

Please find enclosed our comments concerning the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement and a letter that Mr. Harri Wilson requested that I forward to you concerning the same subject. Please send me a copy of the final plan when it is formulated.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Larry J. Stevenson  
Chairman

Enclosure

## Response to Letter 16

## Comment Letter 16

Kerry J. Stevenson, Chairman  
Public Lands Committee  
UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION  
316 W. 700 N.  
Brigham City, UT 84302  
phone: 801 357-7474

COMMENTS OF  
THE UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION  
PERTAINING TO  
THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT'S  
DRAFT  
BOX ELDER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Comments submitted  
July 1985

These comments are submitted by the Utah Hunters Federation, a group of almost 800 sportsmen and sportswomen dedicated to restoring and maintaining quality hunting in Utah. To be specific, we organized to seek less crowding among hunters, greater buck-to-doe and bull elk-to-cow elk ratios, and higher numbers of bucks and bulls allowed to reach maturity.

In reviewing the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, it is plain that the Bureau of Land Management is trying to utilize the public land and resources in the spirit of multiple use. It is our position that wherever a conflict develops between private use of the public land for the profit of individuals or corporations and the public's access to and use of the land for recreation, the public land agencies have a responsibility to the public to manage the land in such a manner that those recreational opportunities are given priority.

## Comment Letter 16

## Response to Letter 16

BOX ELDER RESOURCE PLAN

UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION

Therefore, we recommend that the team adopt Alternative 3 in its entirety. It is by far the best choice from the standpoint of wildlife. In addition the the benefits to wildlife, the stockmen would also benefit. Total numbers of livestock AGUs as well as each specific category of livestock AGUs would be increased over current levels and the quality of range lands would increase due to the improvements for wildlife.

### SPECIFIC UHF RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 16.1 **1. ROAD CLOSURES:** It is critical that road closures are implemented and enforced where there is a conflict between wildlife and vehicle usage. Habitat improvements for wildlife, wintering ranges, and calving/fawning areas should not be disturbed by vehicles or people. Lower hunter concentrations are also desirable during hunting seasons.
- 16.2 **2. PARTIAL ROAD CLOSURES:** If it is not possible or desirable to maintain full road closures, partial closures during critical times such as winter, calving/fawning times, and the big game hunting seasons is a reasonable alternative.
- 16.3 **3. FEWER NEW ROADS:** Timber, Grazing, and Mining all need roads to gain access. Too many roads now crisscross the public lands deteriorating wildlife habitat, creating unstable banks, poor range and wintering areas, poor breeding areas, disrupting calving/fawning areas, and generally decreasing the recreational potential of the public lands. Any new roads need to be very carefully assessed with the potential impacts to wildlife and recreation addressed.
- 16.4 **4. NON-MOTORIZED AREAS TO REMAIN THAT WAY:** It is recommended that non-motorized areas should remain that way and not be changed to motorized usage.
- 16.5 **5. RESTRICTED OR LIMITED VEHICLE USE:** Where some roads are necessary for logging, mining, grazing lease maintenance, or other official business, but yet are in an area of wildlife conflict, it is suggested that limitations be enforced to reduce vehicular traffic in those areas to only those persons and vehicles necessary to carry out those activities. It is also suggested that those who have authority and access rights, not use these areas as private hunting grounds and BLM public lands.

- 16.1 The Draft RMP/EIS proposed considerable acreage as limited or closed to off-road vehicle (ORV) use in Alternatives 2 and 3. Many of these designations were proposed on the basis of potential conflicts, not existing resource problems. Protection offered by other management actions in the Proposed Plan, would prevent adverse impacts to much of the acreage previously proposed for ORV restrictions. Therefore, ORV use will be limited to designated trails in the Donner and Bettridge Creek areas to protect a threatened species, and to existing roads and trails in Visual Resource Management Class II areas and along the old Central Pacific Railroad Grade.

BLM has the authority to impose emergency closures or limitations whenever a need arises. Mule deer and sage grouse hunters sometimes concentrate in sufficient numbers with ORVs to cause a problem in localized areas; closing roads during hunting seasons or limiting hunter access would have to be coordinated with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR). Regulating hunter concentration is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Big Game Control of the UDWR. Again, BLM assists in making recommendations to this board and would be willing to consider reducing hunter concentrations in some areas on public lands.

- 16.2 See Response to Comment 16.1.

- 16.3 It is BLM policy to thoroughly evaluate all planned roads and to rehabilitate the roads that are no longer necessary. Some projects, such as harvesting forest products or utility line construction, require access. It is also BLM policy to close and rehabilitate the temporary roads when the projects are completed.

New permanent access roads are planned in the Baker Hills and Dove Creek Allotments to increase grazing management efficiency. These roads are in the low elevation semi-desert shrub zones and will not adversely affect wildlife.

Under the 1872 Mining Law, a claimant has the right to locate and maintain access to his claims on public land. Construction and maintenance would be subject to the CFR 3809 regulations.

- 16.4 There are presently no closed (non-motorized) areas on public lands in Box Elder County. Several limited designations but no closures have been proposed. (See Proposed Decision 1 for Recreation Program.)
- 16.5 See Response to Comment 16.1.

## Comment Letter 16

## Response to Letter 16

BOX ELDER RESOURCE PLAN

UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION

- 16.6 6. OFF ROAD VEHICLES: It is suggested that severe restrictions if not a total ban on the use of off road vehicles in areas of wildlife conflict be implemented and enforced. The importance of off road opportunities on public lands is recognized, but since human nature is such that not all people will act responsibly, the areas open to such activity need to be spelled out and regulated. There should be considerations for specific off road use areas that are not in competition with hunting areas or wildlife management. Also, there is the obvious deterioration of the environment, roads, habitat, and trails caused by off road vehicles, which costs the BLM in increased maintenance.
- 16.7 7. WINTER RANGES: Wintering ranges are the most critical habitat for big game and should be protected from vehicular travel and undue competition from livestock. This is critical not only for road travel but also off road travel. Off road snow travel (snowmobiles) should be eliminated in these areas during wintering months, to prevent harassment and destruction of wildlife and habitat.
- 16.8 8. FUTURE TRANSPLANTS OF ELK, BIGHORN SHEEP, AND PRONGHORNS: With the increase in the numbers of hunters each year there is a need to increase productivity of the big game herds. It is recommended that the BLM support the reintroduction of elk, and bighorn sheep as called out in Alternative 3 regardless of the of the alternative chosen to implement.
- 16.9 9. CONFLICTS IN GRAZING BETWEEN LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE: It is our position that wildlife should be given precedence over livestock when there is a potential conflict between the two. All of the alternatives listed in the plan, with the exception of Alternative 1, show an increase in livestock AUM's. Alternative 3 also shows an increase in wildlife AUM's due to the reintroduction of elk and bighorn sheep and the increase in numbers of pronghorns. We support this course of action as the best possible since it will benefit all parties.
- 16.10 10. INCREASES IN BIG GAME HABITAT: As the trend toward increased numbers of hunters continues, and more animals of all species are harvested yearly, soon there will not be enough to go around, and more limitations or quotas of some sort will be placed on big game species. All species of big game habitat will need to be improved to provide the maximum sustained yield.

16.6 See Response to Comment 16.1

16.7 See Response to Comment 16.1 for discussion of vehicle limitations or closures for wildlife purposes.

Reducing livestock/wildlife competition for winter range will be a major goal of the AMPs.

At present, snowmobiles or other vehicles or traffic are not a significant problem on winter ranges on public lands in the planning area. If this problem arises, it will be handled as stated in the Response to Comment 16.1.

This RMP proposes to restrict any disturbing activity within mule deer winter range between the crucial dates of December 1 and April 15. (See Proposed Decision 7 for wildlife.)

16.8 The proposed decisions are to agree to the Pilot Mountain bighorn sheep reintroduction and the increase and reintroduction of pronghorn. The Newfoundland Mountain bighorn sheep reintroduction would be authorized but is not considered feasible as long as domestic sheep use the area. As stated in the Response to Comment 14.2, BLM would not agree to the elk reintroduction in the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountains.

16.9 Your analysis of livestock use under the alternatives in the Draft RMP/EIS is incorrect. In Alternative 2, livestock would graze at the active preference level, which is the level of the current grazing permits. Although livestock operators are now authorized to graze livestock at this level, many chose to use a level below the authorized level. Therefore, this alternative would not represent an increase of permitted use but it would be greater than present actual use. Alternative 1 represents the average number of AUMs which the operators have actually used over the last 5 years. Therefore, only Alternative 4 identifies an increase in permitted livestock use.

Mule deer AUMs remain the same under all alternatives and the Proposed RMP because the population and associated AUMs are now considered to be at the herd unit management level. Under the Proposed RMP pronghorn AUMs would increase by 964 AUMs. Bighorn sheep would be allocated 262 AUMs. The elk AUMs would remain at 344 because the proposed decision is not to allow the reintroduction.

16.10 BLM recognizes that hunter demands will increase in the future. Limitations or quotas may need to be enforced at some point. These hunter restrictions are the responsibility of the State Board of Big Game Control. BLM will be preparing and implementing Habitat Management Plans (HMPs) for the planning area in an attempt to improve habitat conditions and thereby allow an increase in wildlife populations. The effectiveness of this improvement will be directly dependent upon the amount of available funding.

## Comment Letter 16

BOX ELDER RESOURCE PLAN

UTAH HUNTERS FEDERATION

- 16.11 11. GRAZING RIGHTS REVENUE: The USFS now sells AUM's at \$1.34, which is considerably less than the State of Utah or other private parties. We assume that the BLM fee is not significantly different. The State of Utah charges 6 to 7 dollars per AUM on a bidding system. It appears that an increase in AUM cost is in order. A fee of 4 or 5 dollars per AUM would not be out of line. We realize that this position will be unpopular with the stockmen who are trying to make a living in a poorly productive area producing a product which is only marginally profitable in the best of areas.
- 16.12 12. MINERAL DEVELOPMENT REVENUE: Mineral development is another area where the BLM appears to be subsidizing losing business ventures. There must be a change in the formula used to determine the fees charged. Grazing and mineral development should be two areas of increased revenues instead of liabilities.
- 16.13 13. POOR LAW ENFORCEMENT: One of the reasons for deteriorating habitat is poor policing of off road vehicles, vandalism, and area closures not being enforced. POACHING and ILLEGAL KILLS are also too numerous to tolerate. The lack of personnel to enforce these types of regulations and laws is a problem which needs to be studied and resolved; however, the lack of enforcement capability is no reason not to close areas to vehicular traffic when conditions warrant.

The UHF is not a professional group in either wildlife management or land management; however, we are interested in the successful management of our public lands and wildlife. It is hoped that our recommendations are taken in a positive and constructive vein. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of those who are charged with the responsibility of managing and protecting public lands and resources. Our thanks go out to them for the many happy hours we spend in the great outdoors in our fine state of Utah. We hope the BLM will remain open to public comment and continue to evaluate it to the benefit of all.

## Response to Letter 16

- 16.11 The AUM fee formula is set by Congress and is outside the jurisdiction of the Box Elder County RMP. AUM costs have been studied by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture for the past few years. When the study has been completed, Congress will again set the fee formula for grazing on public lands.
- 16.12 This issue is outside the jurisdiction of the Box Elder County RMP.
- 16.13 Response to Comment 16.1 discusses ORV problems and road closures. The problem is now limited to the mule deer and sage grouse hunts. BLM is willing to consider road closures on public lands during these periods, but these closures will have to be coordinated through UDWR. Poaching and illegal kills are the responsibility of UDWR.

## Comment Letter 17

ARCO Exploration Company  
Exploration Operations - Western U.S.  
707 17th Street  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 5540  
Denver, Colorado 80217  
Telephone 303 575 1000



July 18, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks, Team Leader  
Salt Lake City District Office  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Re: Box Elder Draft Resource Management Plan and  
Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Oaks:

Atlantic Richfield Company appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Resource Management Plan and accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Box Elder Resource Area in northwestern Utah. While we believe that the plan in general is reasonable, we have a few concerns we would like to address below.

17.1

One of our primary concerns with the plan relates to the proposed restrictions being placed on operations within the vicinity of sage grouse. We are opposed to the two-mile radius surrounding sage grouse breeding complexes. According to published literature, viable grouse populations seem to be dependent more on habitat than the activity near them. Further, the decrease in sage grouse population stability over the last 35 years is directly related to efforts to convert sagebrush range to grasslands; not as an adverse effect of mineral operations. It would seem equitable to mineral leaseholders that the Bureau consider, as part of its plan, re-establishment of sagebrush range to encourage stability rather than to apply severe restrictions on mineral lease holders. Another point, it is our understanding that a 500-foot radius is sufficient to protect strutting grouse. A two-mile radius is extreme, especially in view of the fact that the grouse do not appear to be adversely impacted during critical times of the year in other locations which are subjected to extensive human activity. For instance, every year Jackson Hole, Wyoming, holds tours for people who want to view the sage grouse strut at the Jackson airport. The grouse don't appear to be severely incapacitated by airport activities since they continue to be active each year.

Therefore, we recommend that the BLM modify the bufferzone to a 500-foot radius if such a radius is considered essential.

17.2

We believe it is important to identify what trade-off decisions were made under each alternative. Specifically, the interrelationship between surface and subsurface resources and their uses is important to portray in the planning documents. While the Environmental Consequences section of the Box Elder Environmental Impact Statement addresses these decisions to a limited extent, we wonder whether it is comprehensive enough for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

## Response to Letter 17

17.1 See Response to Comment 12.1.

17.2 In all alternatives, trade-offs are made that affect subsurface resources. Mineral withdrawals now exist on 6,840 widely scattered acres for numerous public water reserves and are proposed to continue. Another 381 acres are proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry in an area containing an officially listed threatened fish and a municipal watershed. These are the only trade-offs proposed in the plan that are detrimental to locatable mineral interests. Appendix 5 of the Draft RMP clearly shows the areas/resource values that

## Comment Letter 17

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
July 18, 1985  
Page 2

17.2

We suggest that the Box Elder planning team review the Colorado BLM's Grand Junction Plan which provides an extensive evaluation of the trade offs between resources. We believe through use of the Grand Junction Plan as a guide the Box Elder Plan could be enhanced in this area.

We support the use of the Bureau's new Fluid Mineral Leasing Guidelines. Their use provides industry and the public with relatively specific information regarding how the Resource Area is to be leased and under what conditions. We fully support the inclusion of a map delineating these lease category areas by alternative.

We agree with BLM's decision under the Preferred Alternative to open 33,506 acres now closed to leasing. We believe that possible leasing and subsequent exploration and development activities in these mountain ranges can be accommodated through mitigation and careful planning of activities.

In general, we believe that the proposed Box Elder Resource Management Plan is reasonable. However, we encourage BLM to incorporate our recommended changes to the plan in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan. It is our contention that these changes will enhance the plan, while making it more reasonable.

Sincerely,

C. M. Moseley  
Public Lands Analyst

influenced fluid mineral categories under each alternative. The principal trade-offs with mineral development occur to watersheds (see page 110 of Draft RMP) and wildlife (see page 112 of Draft RMP). The trade-offs are clearly stated.



Comment Letter 18

Response to Letter 18

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

Regarding the Environmental Impact Statement Draft,  
I would like to let you know my main concerns.

18.1 Under alternatives Land 4, you are proposing legal  
access through private land. I am very much against  
this since there is already access through S.L.M. land.  
We have had a lot of trouble with trespassing in the  
past and a public road through our property would  
make the situation worse.

18.2 My other area of concern is the Elk. I come  
from elk country and they are a nuisance. They do  
ruin a lot of hay and eat more than a cow.  
Another early hunt and more hunters is something  
we don't need.

I have only written my complaints not any of  
the good parts of this study. I'm sure you have  
read enough letters as it is. Best wishes in your  
decisions.

Very truly yours,

Mrs. Norman Kimber  
(Edwin Kimber Estate)

18.1 See Response to Comment 14.1.

18.2 See Response to Comment 14.2.

## Comment Letter 19



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Sawtooth  
National  
Forest

1525 Addison Avenue East  
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301

Reply To: 1920

Date: July 19, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on your Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. We thought that your document was very well done and we have no objections with the selection of Alternative 2 as your Preferred Alternative. There are, however, a few items that we have some concern about, or would like to comment on. These are:

- 85
- 19.1 On page 1, it states that Alternative 2 "allows for a trial reintroduction of elk on the Grouse Creek and Raft River Mountain ranges if certain conditions can be met." The Raft River Mountain area, however, is primarily under U.S. Forest Service administration and private ownership. To our knowledge, there has not been any coordination, as outlined by the Utah Board of Big Game Control, between the B.L.M., the Forest Service, and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources concerning this proposal. Therefore, we would like to recommend that this statement either be deleted, or modified to explain that this is only a proposal that would have to be coordinated between all the interested parties.
  - 19.2 On page 3, it states that in Alternative 3 there will be a "reintroduction of elk and bighorn into 13 allotments and 2 allotments, respectively." It would be beneficial to us if we knew where these allotments were located.
  - 19.3 On page 4, we noted that under the Wildlife Habitat section, it states that, "Big Game would remain at current levels under Alternatives 1 and 2." On page 1, however, it stated that elk would be reintroduced in Alternative 2. These two statements appear to contradict themselves.
  - 19.4 On page 26, under the Issue 2: Vegetation Management section, two criteria are listed dealing with conditions needed for the reintroduction of elk into the Raft River Mountain area. Here again, we would like to



FS-6200-28(7-82)

## Response to Letter 19

- 19.1 Big game reintroduction proposals are the responsibility of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. UDWR gave this proposal to BLM for consideration during the planning process. Therefore, BLM assumed that the Sawtooth National Forest had been informed of the proposed elk reintroduction. BLM's proposed decision is not to agree to the elk reintroduction on public lands in the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges.
- 19.2 The elk reintroduction was projected to affect the following 13 allotments: Junction Creek, Yost Pastures, Janey's Spring, Red Butte, Ingham, Muddy Creek, Ingham Pass, Cycle Spring, Rosebud, Pine Creek, Warm Spring, Hirschi and Fisher Creek. Bighorn sheep are proposed for reintroduction in the Lucin/Pilot and the Newfoundland Allotments. These allotments were listed in the Draft RMP with the projected forage needs in Appendix 3c "Forage Use by Allotment - Alternative 3." Figure D "Box Elder Planning Area Grazing Allotments" shows the location of these allotments. As mentioned in Response to Comment 19.1, BLM's proposed decision is not to agree to the elk reintroduction on public lands.
- 19.3 See Response to Comments 19.1 and 21.3.
- 19.4 See Response to Comment 19.1.

## Comment Letter 19



Mr. Dennis Oaks

2.

- 19.5 recommend the inclusion of a statement which points out that there needs to be some coordinating activities with all the parties involved. It should also be pointed out that the winter range issue needs to be agreed upon with the private landowners before any elk could be reintroduced.
- Also on page 26, in the same section, it states that, "UDWR is proposing a reintroduction of bighorn sheep onto the Raft River Mountains on Forest Service lands." However, neither the Burley Ranger District, nor the Supervisors Office, have been contacted concerning this proposal. Domestic sheep still graze on several portions of the Raft River Mountain area, and this could potentially create some conflicts.
- 19.6 On the Tracts Recommended for Disposal in Alternatives 2 and 4 map, located on page 33, we have a question concerning the location of tract #29. According to our records, this tract of land is already under private ownership.
- 19.7 On page 45, under the Habitat Management Plans section, the Raft River Mountain Range was listed as a priority area for which habitat management plans should be prepared. Shouldn't the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management make a joint decision on this particular issue?
- 19.8 On page 74, under the Poisonous Plants and Noxious Weeds section, it states that, "Noxious weed control is the responsibility of Box Elder County." This statement is not entirely correct. Noxious weed control responsibilities lie with the State, the Counties, and the landowners.
- 19.9 On page 87, under the Elk section, the discussion should contain an explanation that the elk should not be reintroduced in the Raft River Mountain area until the winter range problem is solved (i.e. wintering on private lands).
- 19.10 On page 88, under the Bighorn Sheep section, it states that, "The Raft River Mountain reintroduction would be on U.S. Forest Service administered lands and would involve a population of about 100 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep." Please refer to our comments regarding this subject on page 26.
- 19.11 On the same page, in the following paragraph, it states that, "Domestic sheep on the Pilot and Newfoundland ranges could transmit diseases to the nonimmune native sheep." We would like to suggest that the Raft River Mountain range be included in this statement.

Please consider these comments in the development of your Final Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. We look forward to working with you concerning any coordinating activities that will be needed

## Response to Letter 19

- 19.5 UDWR gave the bighorn sheep reintroduction proposal to BLM for consideration during the planning process. Again, BLM assumed that the Sawtooth National Forest had been informed of the proposed reintroduction. It was also assumed that the Sawtooth National Forest would have the lead in preparing the Habitat Management Plan and cooperative transplant agreement, in which the BLM would be a cosignatory. BLM was considering the winter range habitat requirements on public lands. BLM assumed that any problems with the reintroduction such as conflicts with domestic sheep would be worked out between the Sawtooth National Forest and the UDWR.
- 19.6 BLM records show the tract to be public land. BLM will check county records for verification of ownership before undertaking a disposal.
- 19.7 The listing of the Raft River Mountain Range as a priority HMP area was due to its joint preparation with the Grouse Creek Mountain Range HMP. It would be coordinated with the Sawtooth National Forest. If the Sawtooth National Forest decided not to cooperate in the HMP, the document would cover only the public land around the base of the Raft River Mountain Range.
- 19.8 The change has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 74.
- 19.9 See Response to Comment 19.1.
- 19.10 See Response to Comment 19.5.
- 19.11 The change has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 88.

## Comment Letter 19



Mr. Dennis Oaks

3.

relating to the possible reintroduction of elk and bighorn sheep in the Raft River Mountain area. We would also appreciate it if you could send us copies of any future correspondence you may have concerning this subject.

Sincerely,

ROLAND M. STOLESON  
Forest Supervisor

cc:  
Hendricks  
Rudak  
D-1



## Comment Letter 20

P.O. Box 21  
Grouse Creek, Utah 84313  
July 20, 1985

Salt Lake District BLM Office  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

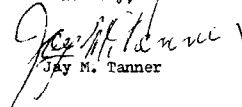
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the RMP/EIS.

The planning criteria states that "Social and economic impacts to local communities resulting from public land management will be considered." Keeping this objective in mind, I would encourage you to select alternative 4 as the BLM's preferred alternative. The livestock industry is the mainstay of the local economies, and any improvement to the grazing capacity of the area will improve the socioeconomics of the area.

- 88
- 20.1 Regarding the allotment categories, I am concerned that some of the categories have been changed from what was agreed upon by Mr. Martinez and the permittees in the various allotments. Please explain why these changes were selected.
- 20.2 I would encourage you to address the return of the suspended AUM's in some of the allotments. Is there a plan to return the AUM's, and what will be the criteria for determining what will be done?
- 20.3 I am opposed to the introduction of elk in the Grouse Creek and Raft River Mountains. I feel that the private land owners in the area will be damaged, and I am concerned that access problems will increase in the affected areas.
- 20.4 I would also encourage you to consider increasing the acreage the bureau will attempt to burn. This appears to be an effective and low cost approach to removing sage brush and juniper trees.

Thank you again for your meeting with us and explaining the RMP/EIS. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Jay M. Tanner

tlr

## Response to Letter 20

- 20.1 As was explained at the meetings held to jointly categorize each allotment, the categories agreed to at the meetings were tentative and remain so throughout the planning process. Changes were made as additional information came to light. In no case would the change in category lessen the concerns of the public, and in all cases the changes were made in part to better accommodate the needs of the resource and the public. For example, in some allotments the condition and potential of the resource and the issues raised by the public better fit within the definition of a maintain category; therefore, the category was tentatively changed.
- 20.2 Suspended non-use AUMs are being closely studied for possible reinstatement in some allotments. The policy for reinstatement of these AUMs is described in Proposed Decision 4 for the Range Program.
- Permanent reinstatement of suspended non-use AUMs will be made only if monitoring data substantiates the existing indications that the resource can sustain the additional use. Reinstatement will follow a schedule agreed to by both the permittees and the BLM as defined in an AMP.
- 20.3 See Response to Comment 14.2.
- 20.4 Prescribed fire will be one of many tools used in range improvement projects in the county. Burning can be an effective, low-cost alternative to traditional treatment methods; however, as is the case with other tools, it has its place and should never be considered as the final answer. Fire will be used by the BLM where it is determined to be the best tool for range improvement after all options are analyzed. As stated in the proposed decisions, BLM will prepare a Fire Management Plan to take advantage of natural ignitions and prescribed fire for range and habitat improvement.

## Comment Letter 21



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES  
2060 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
1745 WEST 1700 SOUTH  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84104-5110

IN REPLY REFER TO: (ES)

July 24, 1988

### MEMORANDUM

To: Team Leader, Box Elder Resource Management Plan  
Bureau of Land Management, Salt Lake City, Utah

From: Acting Field Supervisor, Ecological Services  
Fish & Wildlife Service, Salt Lake City, Utah

Subject: Fish and Wildlife Service Comments on the Draft  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan (RMP) and  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

We have reviewed the draft Box Elder RMP and EIS and offer these general and specific comments on it.

#### General Comments

21.1

In general, we believe the document you submitted for review fails to advise the public of the existing environmental conditions of the public lands in Box Elder County or what management is planned in an understandable manner. Addressing fish and wildlife resource concerns, the document completely fails to track wildlife's existing condition, their needs and problems or solutions to their problems and needs. It is our opinion this needs correcting.

21.2

The public should not need to have a library of supplementary documents available to understand how things are, what needs to be done and how to get improvements made in a full disclosure document. Your RMP/EIS requires supplemental materials as it is now presented. This should be corrected.

21.3

The draft RMP/EIS does not provide a range of management choices. When livestock forage management is compared to wildlife forage management, three alternatives are livestock enhancement options 1, 2, and 4 and alternative 1 represents no change from the present management.

Since 1976 per capita beef consumption declined while total meat consumption remained stable (Fedkiw, 1985). This was occurred while U.S. population increased and per capita disposable real income rose. Under these circumstances, why is an increase in private cattle grazing so important while the public's wildlife resources are allowed to languish through neglect?

## Response to Letter 21

21.1

The Council of Environmental Quality Regulations call for this RMP/EIS to be less than 150 pages. To meet this requirement, the regulations provide for tiering of information (1502.20) and incorporating information by reference (1502.21). Supplemental material is available at the District office.

21.2

Additional information has been added to the descriptions of the alternatives for clarification.

21.3

With the exception of Alternative 4, an increase in cattle grazing is not identified. Alternative 4 was not selected to be included in the proposed plan. BLM does not believe that wildlife on the public lands of Box Elder County are neglected.

## Comment Letter 21

The FWS suggests reconsideration of alternatives to meet your stated goals for public land management.

### Specific Comments

- 21.4 Chapter 1, Issues, pages 10-11. This section identifies the issues in the resource area as Land Ownership, Vegetation Management, Mineral Development and Off-Road Vehicle Use. Wildlife (and fish) resources was not included as an issue; yet, four out of the six decisions needed in vegetative management are wildlife related. The other two decisions, although not specifying wildlife relationships, are important to wildlife. This, however, is not mentioned. Fish and wildlife resources receive considerable print elsewhere throughout the document for something that is not considered an issue. Under the circumstances, why were wildlife resources not considered an issue?
- 21.5 Page 11, Planning Criteria, (b), states, "The planning process will identify those lands which will best serve public needs .... and those lands which are difficult ... to manage ...." On page 10 in Issue 1: Land Ownership Adjustments, BLM reports the checkerboard pattern of Federal, state and private lands results in resource management problems. If this is the case, why haven't blocking surface ownerships emerged as an option to improve surface management?
- 21.6 Page 11-12, Planning Criteria. In this section it appears all decisions or actions are to be postponed until some later unspecified date. If the RMP and EIS is a full disclosure document on the proposed management of the public lands in Box Elder County, how can discussions of the future actions or management options be avoided in the text and only generalized in the Appendices? When will the public become involved in the planning process if not now? It is the opinion of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) this document does not comply with NEPA or the court order requiring grazing EIS's for BLM administered lands.
- 21.7 Page 19, Land Actions. The FWS believes the BLM should consider blocking surface ownerships for more efficient management of both public and private surface owners.
- 21.8 The FWS supports efforts to acquire access to isolated public lands to improve the management of wildlife. Hunting is the only satisfactory means the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) has to control game populations, and the lack of hunter access may allow game populations to increase beyond range capacity and cause damage to range and private crops. Public access for hunting should be a priority consideration whenever needed for proper game management.

## Response to Letter 21

- 21.4 In BLM's planning process, issues are considered to significant resource problems or conflict. The issues addressed in this RMP are the result of an extensive issue-identification process involving BLM, other agencies, and the public. Wildlife resources are considered an issue in the ways in which they relate to other resources and uses. No one resource program or use was identified as an issue by itself. However, the wildlife resource program is an important part of the RMP. Specific decisions for wildlife resources are found in the proposed plan portion of this document.
- 21.5 Proposed decisions in the Lands Program of the Proposed RMP include disposal of some parcels and the retention of others. All lands in the retention category are available for consideration for exchanges that would improve the surface ownership pattern.
- 21.6 Some proposed decisions call for interim actions before actual implementation of an action on the ground. These interim actions provide orderly progression, which makes the final action more effective. Environmental assessments are prepared for all site-specific actions. These assessments are coordinated with appropriate agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- 21.7 See Response to Comment 21.6.
- 21.8 No specific easements for legal access are proposed, but the Proposed Plan recommends that this option remain available to BLM when specific management needs are identified.

## Comment Letter 21

- 21.9 Page 23, Sections on Habitat Management Plans and Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat. These two sections are ambiguous and should be clarified or removed. Points needing to be addressed are: For what species will improvements be made? What habitat needs improving and where? What improvements are planned and why would they succeed?
- 21.10 Obviously, all wildlife species will not be receiving attention as these sections imply. Habitat improvements, as generally applied in wildlife management, are relatively few but well known. Wildlife improvements should be correlated with wildlife needs by allotment, the same as for livestock, to clear up this ambiguity.
- 21.11 Page 21, Table 2-1. In Table 2-1 under all of the proposed categories of allotments, the concluding sentence reads, "Permittees will be encouraged to invest in rangeland improvements." What controls will BLM retain over these "rangeland improvements" to protect wildlife habitat? Our concern is particularly directed to potential habitat for endangered Lahontan cutthroat, also sage grouse and deer winter habitat, and springs and seeps used by late summer sage grouse broods. Will BLM consult with the UDWR on all permittee rangeland improvements contemplated?
- 21.12 Pages 17-67, Chapter 2, Description of the Alternatives. Only a cursory examination of the alternatives is needed to see Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 are designed to increase livestock grazing on public lands in Box Elder County while Alternative 1 provides for no change in management. To illustrate this point we use Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative) to describe baseline grazing allocations. If grazing management continues as is, 37,733 AUMs (70%) of the forage is allotted for livestock (cattle, sheep and domestic horses) and 16,536 AUMs (30%) is reserved for wildlife (mule deer, pronghorn, elk and bighorn sheep).
- Alternative 2, the preferred alternative which "seeks to resolve issues in the most balanced, cost-effective manner," divides the forage so livestock gets 45,704 AUMs (73%) and wildlife gets 16,536 (27%). The preferred alternative would increase livestock AUMs by 8,000 but provides no increases in AUMs for wildlife. Where is the "balance" in this division? Clearly this is a livestock enhancement alternative and not a balanced multiple use division of the forage resource.
- Alternative 3, is described as giving priority to protection and enhancement of wildlife, watershed, aesthetics and nonmotorized recreation, while reducing resource use and commodity production. Under this alternative livestock would be allotted 43,855 AUMs (70%) and wildlife is allotted 18,410 AUMs (30%) of the forage.

## Response to Letter 21

- 21.9 BLM proposes to complete HMPs according to a priority schedule (see Wildlife Proposed Decision 8). Once prepared and signed, these HMPs will provide specific guidance for wildlife habitat projects.
- 21.10 It is BLM policy to coordinate activity plans for different resource uses to the maximum extent possible. It is also BLM policy to base HMP boundaries on District biological units and not on man-made boundaries such as allotment fences. Therefore, the HMPs and range AMPs will be coordinated so that wildlife objectives are met, but HMPs will not be prepared by range allotment.
- 21.11 The statement "Permittees will be encouraged to invest in rangeland improvements" should be clarified to say "Permittees will be encouraged to invest either partial or full funding or labor in rangeland improvements constructed jointly by the BLM and rangeland users on public lands." Permittees are encouraged to do this because it helps spread limited funding and benefits more users of public lands. Any rangeland improvements done on public land, regardless of the funding source, would conform to BLM construction standards and mitigating measures. Mitigating measures in addition to BLM's standard stipulations would be developed in the site-specific Environmental Assessments. These assessments would be coordinated with UDWR.
- 21.12 See Response to Comment 21.3.



## Comment Letter 21

## Response to Letter 21

- This is the same division of forage as the no action alternative provides. Where is the priority for wildlife in this alternative? Alternative 3 indicates 262 AUMs would be provided for bighorn sheep. Does this include the bighorn sheep forage discussed in Alternative 2 and described as, "Some of these bighorn sheep could winter at the lower elevations on public land. AUMs for this use would not need to be identified because conflicts for forage would be insignificant and the exact use areas are presently unknown" (page 26, Issue 2: Vegetation Management), but now is being counted under the wildlife enhancement alternative.
- 21.12 Alternative 4 which gives priority to resource use (livestock grazing) and commodity production would provide 51,260 AUMs (78%) for livestock and 14,374 AUMs (22%) for wildlife. This division of forage is not much different from the preferred alternative.
- In summary, if this RMP/EIS is to represent the comparison of four different grazing management plans meeting multi-resource objectives, it has not done so. The FWS requests the BLM, in cooperation with the UDWR and the FWS, to reconsider the preferred alternative, and develop a new preferred alternative that gives balance and fairness to the wildlife resources on the public lands in Box Elder County.
- 21.13 Page 23, Wildlife and Fisheries Program. This section failed to address threatened and endangered species in its discussion. It should be amended to include the threatened and endangered species on public land in the Resource Area.
- 21.14 Page 59, Table 2-6, footnote 1C reads, "See policy for rangeland improvements under Description of Alternative 2." No policy for rangeland improvements is included in Alternative 2 in Chapter 2. Where is it?
- 21.15 Pages 82-94, Wildlife Habitat Section in its entirety. This section is supposed to include only the existing environment that will be affected by the proposed action(s); however, this document is written in negative generalities covering several unaffected species. It fails to describe existing conditions of species that would be affected by the proposed action and includes real and imagined problems that may occur from causes other than implementing the proposal. An EIS only requires discussion of those parts of the environment that would be affected by implementing a proposed action. In the case of mule deer (beginning page 82 and Appendix 3) 15,570 AUMs are presently allotted to them. Forage allotted to deer would remain at 15,570 AUMs if the preferred alternative (2) and enhanced wildlife alternative (3) were implemented, but would be reduced by 1,400 AUMs under the livestock alternative (4). Under this situation, only the mule deer population that would lose the 1,400 AUMs need to be included. Mule deer would be unaffected by Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 eliminating the need to discuss them. In the discussion of Alternative 4, you need to describe those mule deer whose

21.13 See Response to Comment 13.4.

21.14 The policy for how rangeland improvements would be handled under Alternative 2 is discussed on page 32, column 1, 3rd paragraph in the Draft RMP/EIS.

21.15 The wildlife portion of the affected environment section describes those species that could be affected by the alternatives. Chapter 3, "The Affected Environment," has been reviewed in relation to the species included, the environmental analysis in Chapter 4, and the proposed decisions of the Proposed RMP. All were found to be necessary.

## Comment Letter 21

numbers would be reduced, and what action(s) in implementing the alternative would cause the decrease. The same rationale applies to all other species.

21.16 Page 73, last sentence in the last paragraph states, "The riparian habitat type is generally in poor condition due to heavy use by livestock, wildlife and recreationists."

This is the first the FWS has learned that riparian habitat has been damaged by wildlife in the United States. Please document your source of information or delete wildlife from this statement.

21.17 Page 88, paragraph 2 beginning line 4, you state, "Domestic sheep... could transmit diseases to nonimmune native sheep." What diseases are you referring to? The lung worm and associated secondary infections caused by them are believed to be the most feared infection bighorn sheep can get; however, Colorado has found lung worms are not transmitted from domestic sheep to bighorns or from bighorns to domestic sheep. Lung worm infections can only be transmitted from bighorns to bighorns. Bighorns transplanted into vacant habitat should be treated for lung worms to avoid infecting their new habitat to control the problem.

Page 88 and 93. Sage Grouse (in its entirety). This entire section is full of errors and misconceptions which include:

- 21.18
- (1) Last sentence, paragraph 1 states, "Black sagebrush areas are preferred winter feeding grounds." This is an error, and we know of no references to substantiate that statement. Extensive references report only big sagebrush (*A. tridentata*) is used in sage grouse winter diet... If this is a local phenomenon, it is worthy of publication.
  - (2) Paragraph 1, line 14, you state, "Sage grouse generally winter as close to their lek as weather permits, but may be pushed to the lower foothills and sometimes onto the desert sagebrush hills." This is a misconception because the sage grouse winter range includes the strutting grounds and nesting habitat. The leks are often in big sagebrush habitat in the winter range, and over 74% of the nests occur within 3 Km of the lek. We know of no documented cases where weather forced sage grouse off their traditional winter range.

## Response to Letter 21

21.16 The change has been made. (See Revisions and Corrections for page 73.)

21.17 Examples of diseases which could be transmitted are scabies and lungworm. The UDWR, Nevada Fish and Game Dept., Sawtooth National Forest and BLM have all expressed hesitancy of reintroducing bighorn sheep into areas where they could come into contact with domestic sheep because of the risk of infection.

- 21.18
1. The black sagebrush areas are usually windswept and open in the winter, and several of these areas are used as strutting grounds. Personal observations of grouse and grouse droppings indicate that these areas are quite heavily used including feeding within the planning area during the winter months.
  2. In western Box Elder County and in Rich County there are leks at higher elevations that quite often receive enough snow to cover the sagebrush. When this happens, the birds will be found at lower elevations. In Box Elder County, large winter flocks have been observed all the way out in the desert on low sagebrush hills. At this same time, birds cannot be found on or around the leks. Therefore, it is assumed they migrate to lower elevations and away from the main leks.

## Comment Letter 21

- (3) Page 94, paragraph 1, beginning in line 4 you state, "During severe winters, the amount of suitable winter habitat is a limiting factor on the sage grouse population." We do not know of any documentation to support this statement and ask you to reference your source. This scenario would only be true if spraying, burning, chaining or other range manipulation action caused near total destruction of the big sagebrush on the sage grouse's winter range.

Probably the most critical habitat need of sage grouse is late summer brood range, according to studies in Nevada. (Savage, 1969) (Oakleaf, 1971).

21.18

- (4) Page 93, page 2 you state, "Additional water is expected to expand available habitat for sage grouse." This statement does not describe the affected environment and should be deleted. At best, the proposed actions (alternatives) will only leave sage grouse unaffected. On the other hand, water development per se will not increase sage grouse populations as you indicate. The best solution BLM has is to protect brood range where sage grouse congregate in the late summer around riparian, spring and seep areas from livestock grazing and trampling. Only this solution would prove to be a cost effective measure to help sage grouse.

Page 113, Alternative 2, paragraph 4, 3rd sentence states, "Most wildlife species habitat conditions would improve, especially in the long term." According to Issue 2: Vegetation Management on page 26 and in Appendix 3, wildlife AUMs will remain the same as they would be under the No Action Alternative (page 25 and in Appendix 3). If wildlife habitat will improve, why isn't more forage allotted to wildlife? Is this increase in wildlife forage being converted to make up part of the 8,000 AUMs given to livestock by implementing Alternative 2? The FWS believes more planning is needed in wildlife matters before this RMP/EIS is made final, because there is no predictable improvements for wildlife resources to make a balanced resource division.

21.19

Page 128, Appendix 2, 3rd paragraph under the topic of Chemical Treatment states, "Since these treatments are for wildlife habitat improvement, they would be designed to improve conditions for big game ...." We know of no chemical treatment generally applied by BLM that improves wildlife habitat. What chemical treatments are you proposing? What is the target plant species? How would the treatment improve wildlife habitat? Where are the AUMs gained for wildlife?

21.20

## Response to Letter 21

3. The author has observed 2 or 3 feet of snow on the ground and a 40 m.p.h. north wind blowing. Under these conditions, the sagebrush is nearly all covered and available or suitable habitat becomes limiting. Personal observation by BLM wildlife personnel is the source of information.

4. The purpose of the "Affected Environment" section is to describe what major species habitats are present, how they may be affected by proposals in the plan and what the limiting factors are. Many parts of the planning area appear marginally suitable as sage grouse habitat, such as the Hogup Mountain Range. However, water and sage grouse are not present. It is assumed that providing water for pronghorn could allow sage grouse to survive in these areas.

Proposed Watershed Decision 5 sets forth riparian management objectives. Activity plans such as HMPs, AMPs and MUMPs (Multiple Use Management Plans) will set forth specific planned actions to achieve the stated objectives. These objectives and planned actions will strive to improve riparian habitat conditions where presently they are only fair or poor and to maintain those in good to excellent condition. One of the benefits of this decision will be improved sage grouse brooding habitat.

- 21.19 Reduced spring grazing is expected to improve the vegetative vigor and desirable species composition. Alternative 2 shows AUMs required for present levels of big game. Therefore, Alternative 1 - No Action - would require the same level of wildlife AUMs. Alternative 3 shows where these increased vegetative conditions could support more wildlife, mainly in terms of an elk reintroduction and an increase in pronghorn. Alternative 4 would convert some wildlife AUMs to livestock AUMs.

The reason mule deer AUMs remain the same under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 is that this is the forage required to support the number of deer in UDWR's Herd Unit Management Plan.

- 21.20 The vegetative manipulation referred to is the treatment of dense juniper stands with tebuthiuron. The objective would be to kill some of the juniper, thereby opening up the stand to allow the browse understory to improve within mule deer winter range. The designs leave adequate thermal and escape cover untreated. These treatments will be further defined and evaluated within an HMP. The HMP will also determine or estimate the increase in mule deer forage.

## Comment Letter 21

We thank you for this opportunity to review and comment on the draft RMP/EIS and would be willing to work with you in resolving the problems with wildlife habitat management we have pointed out.

*Robert C. Garrison*

Reference: Fedkiw, John, 1985. Questions and Implications for Range Management Based on the Demand Outlook for Red Meat and Range Grazing. Rangelands 7(3):100-104.

cc: Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, SLC; Ogden

Comment Letter 22

Response to Letter 22

Grange Creek, Utah  
July 17, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder Resource Management Plan Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Mr. Oaks:

Enclosed are my comments on the RMP/EIS  
draft.

Picking one alternative over the other is like shopping  
for a new car. Each has its good & bad qualities and  
its reputation.

We lived here all my life and my father and  
his father. In '58. Livestock has been our  
way of life there fore the alternative I chose  
would be No 4.

In the beginning the federal government encouraged  
people to settle these sparsely populated areas with  
the homestead act, the desert land act and grazing  
act. It wasn't easy and those people paid pretty  
dear for some of these holdings. Now comes the point  
of same government asking them or demanding them  
to share their rights & privileges with every Tom, Dick,  
and Harry. In my book, that's not right or fair

## Comment Letter 22

## Response to Letter 22

- 22.1 If I were the District Manager and had to make the final decision my first priority would be the social and economic impact to local communities. Second priority - The effect of public Land management on neighboring lands.
- 22.2 I don't believe the introduction of Elk or any other game animal is in the best interest of the Grange Creek Area. Sooner or later there is a conflict and feelings. As I write this letter, the pronghorn they planted way south of here are now into the irrigated cropland of the valley - who benefits from this?
- 22.3 BLM Proposed physical and legal access is perhaps not justified. I don't believe any Agency has the right to go everywhere without asking permission. It keeps them humble. Our way of life has been created by people being ~~free~~ free and making decisions lets keep it that way.
- 22.4 On page 122 it states - forage authorized in Alternative 4 would be 3,390 AUMs above proper levels and result in a decline in Wildlife habitat conditions. On page 104 it states - sufficient data is not available to determine the proper grazing capacity for each allotment. Therefore the BLM assumed there would be a decline in wildlife habitat by forage authorized in Alternative 4.

- 22.1 The District Manager's first priority is to provide multiple use management of the public lands. He must try to balance the needs of many users against the acceptable limits of the public lands to meet those needs. Public land management and neighboring private land management have effects upon each other. Both parties benefit from communication and coordination in their respective stewardship.
- 22.2 See Response to Comment 14.2.
- 22.3 The legal access identified in the Draft RMP has been eliminated from the Proposed Plan. The physical access included in the Proposed Plan would cross only public land.
- 22.4 BLM's analysis assumption for grazing use was found on page 103 (number 3) in the Draft RMP/EIS. Following the assumption that grazing use in Alternative 2 is at the proper level, it logically follows that a level of use 3,390 AUMs above proper use would be detrimental to the vegetative resource and result in a decline in wildlife habitat conditions.

Comment Letter 22

Response to Letter 22

I believe in the exchange of lands to create blocks of BLM lands & private lands. In my opinion both would benefit.

22.5 Also on page 100 under Unavoidable Adverse Impacts, I don't think that the conditions that apply to erosion, the sage grouse, or deer are as ~~crucial~~ crucial as it has been stated. There is just too much evidence that anything done to enhance livestock grazing benefits wildlife. We seen it and read it. RMP draft deals with Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species - the small livestock operators should be included in that category and in my opinion given as much consideration as given to each and everyone of them mentioned.

On page 100 under Ranch-Related Economic Conditions it states and is true - BLM management could offset all of the factors except price per unit weight at sale of livestock. In making rules & regulations take this into consideration. How many of you would trade places with us and live and try to live within your rules & regulations?

How do I see it? how do you see it?

22.6 In page 72 of the RMP draft there is a picture it says Former site of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp near Rabbit Springs - In my opinion it is near Rabbit Springs but its a picture of an abandoned Tompkins mill. The CCC camp was further west.

22.5 It is true that some range improvements can benefit wildlife if wildlife needs are considered in the design and implementation. However, when sagebrush is treated in sage grouse habitat or deer winter range, the resulting livestock benefits come at the expense of wildlife habitat conditions. Treatments in other areas would cause a short-term, up to 5-year, loss of habitat and range condition. Erosion would increase with treatment in the short term and gradually would be reduced below the original level.

22.6 The change has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 72.

## Comment Letter 22

22.7

On pages of the same draft 163, 164, 165  
Average Cattle Ranch Budget - you state the price  
received for heifers & steers were the same per lb.  
There has always been a spread of \$.05 to \$.10  
a lb difference. Heifers never have been unless (regretted)  
been used for the same price we receive for steers. Always  
less money. Therefore your budget figures are not true.

How many more not truth statements are there  
in the draft?

Everyone wants money, everyone wants power, and the  
grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.  
Those who would prefer Alternative 3 which in numbers,  
are a lot of people, should organize & put forth money  
& responsibility to achieve some of the part of what they  
would like to see done. Let's work together and make the  
most of all resources. Where there's a will, there's a way.  
Just don't take from some to give to others.

In conclusion what ever choice is made, we produce  
food for mankind and everyone has to eat.

Sincerely  
Jack O. Hinner

## Response to Letter 22

22.7

Ranch budgets are prepared largely on averaged figures. Prices  
identified for steers and heifers in the data sources used for the  
budgets did not give separate prices. This may be due to averaging  
the prices to allow all yearlings to be represented by one price for  
statistical purposes. Data sources used were the November 16, 1983  
Utah Farmer-Stockman and the Utah Agricultural Statistics.

The influence of the same price for steers and heifers on ranch  
budgets would be much less than that of frequent fluctuations in  
market prices paid for these animals.



## Comment Letter 23



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION VIII  
ONE DENVER PLACE — 999 18TH STREET — SUITE 1300  
DENVER, COLORADO 80202-2413

JUL 23 1985

Ref: BPM-EA

Dennis Oaks, Team Leader  
Salt Lake District Office  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

The Region VIII Office of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its review of the Box Elder Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. In general, the draft RMP/EIS does a very good job of explaining the existing environment, the alternatives and their impacts. The maps and tables contained in the EIS are well done and helpful in understanding both the issues and the tradeoffs. Tables such as 2-6 and 2-7 do a good job of summarizing the alternatives and their impacts in a way that facilitates comparisons. A few additional black and white photographs of the resource area would have also been helpful to the reader.

23.1 There was no discussion of flood control efforts on the Great Salt Lake and their potential impacts on the Box Elder Planning Area. If these efforts will impact the planning area, they should be discussed in the final RMP/EIS.

23.2 The discussion throughout the draft RMP/EIS on soils, watershed, and riparian habitats is good. We are also encouraged by your commitment to monitor all allotments to determine if management objectives are being met. Streams meeting or exceeding the current Utah water quality standards should be identified. There should be clarification of how BLM's Water Quality Management Program is integrated with the State's Water Quality Management Program.

23.3 We commend the BLM for addressing watershed treatment needs and alternative treatment levels. We would like to see some kind of a ranking in priority given to the various measures (for example, high, medium or low). This is important, given resource and budgetary limitations, so the reader knows what is likely to be accomplished given those constraints. We believe Alternative 3 best addresses existing water quality and erosion problems and therefore urge its adoption. If Alternative 2 is chosen, we recommend incorporating as many range, watershed, riparian and soil improvements as possible from Alternative 3. Alternative 3 best addresses such key issues as ORV use, protection of riparian habitat, and livestock grazing patterns.

## Response to Letter 23

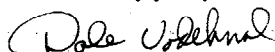
- 23.1 No current flood control activities impact public lands in Box Elder County. An EIS is now being prepared to determine the impacts of pumping lake water into the desert west of the lake and also of diking along the east and southeast lakeshore. If a decision is made to implement these flood control measures, the BLM will incorporate the necessary management adjustments into the RMP through a planning amendment.
- 23.2 Air, Soils, and Water Proposed Decision 3 identifies streams that will be monitored to ensure that they continue to meet State water quality standards. Proposed Decision 1 of the Air, Soils, and Water Program describes how BLM's water quality management integrates with the State water quality management program.
- 23.3 Watershed treatments will be ranked for priority as the budget is established each fiscal year. The District workload, priorities, and budget vary too much from year-to-year to do long-range ranking of treatment priorities. The specific watershed treatment proposed for Warm Springs Wash in Alternative 3 is not included in the Proposed Plan. It was dropped after joint evaluation by BLM and SCS determined that the treatment would not be practical. This sentiment was also universally expressed by the Box Elder Sounding Board at a field review of the proposed treatment. A landowner on the area of proposed treatment also concurred. Watershed, riparian zones, and soils will be carefully considered in land treatments undertaken in activity plans. The objective will be to protect or enhance these valuable resources.

## Comment Letter 23

2

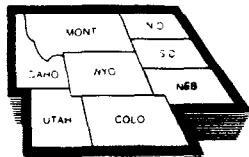
Based on your concerns and the criteria EPA has established to rate the adequacy of draft EISs, we have rated the Box Elder draft EIS as Category B. This means we have environmental concerns regarding the preferred alternative's protection and improvement of water quality values. However, we do believe the draft EIS does a good job of setting forth the environmental impacts of all the alternatives. If you need further EPA assistance, please contact Dennis Schock of my staff at (303) 293-1702 or FTS 564-1702.

Sincerely yours,



Dale Vodehnal, Chief  
Environmental Assessment Branch

## Comment Letter 24



### Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association, Inc.

July 24, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder RMP Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

I am writing on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association (RMOGA) in response to the BLM's request for comments on the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Box Elder Resource Area. RMOGA is a trade association representing hundreds of members who account for more than 90% of the oil and gas exploration, production and transportation activities in the eight-state region we serve. Because so much of the land in these states is owned by the Federal Government, our members have a vital interest in how land management plans provide for mineral exploration and development on federal lands.

We applaud the utilization of the BLM's Fluid Mineral Leasing Guidelines to provide site-specific information regarding which areas are to be leased and what type of stipulations will be used. However, we are concerned that the plan may not present trade-off analyses between surface and subsurface resources that are specific enough to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We believe that consideration of every resource trade-off under each alternative is essential to the preparation of a valid and acceptable plan. We would encourage you to review the approach contained in the Colorado BLM's Grand Junction Resource Area plan, which provides a comprehensive evaluation of resource trade-offs and clearly illustrates what trade-off decisions were made under each alternative.

We support the decision under the Preferred Alternative to open 33,506 acres which are now closed to leasing. Although we are not pleased to see the degree of restriction imposed by the various stipulations, we are encouraged that by utilization of stipulations, more acreage can be opened to mineral leasing rather than withdrawn. We believe that leasing and subsequent exploration and development activities can be adapted to any environment through prudent planning and mitigation efforts.

Alice I. Frell  
Lands Director

345 PETROLEUM BUILDING • DENVER, COLORADO 80202  
303/534-8281

## Response to Letter 24

24.1 See Response to Comment 12.2

## Comment Letter 24

July 24, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Box Elder RMP Team Leader  
Bureau of Land Management

page two

24.2

However, we strongly recommend that the BLM restrict the area surrounding sage grouse breeding complexes to a 500 foot radius. A two mile radius around these areas is extreme and unjustified, given the fact that grouse populations seem to be more dependent on habitat than nearby activities, and that the decrease in sage grouse population in the past has been attributed not to oil and gas or other activities, but to efforts to convert sagebrush range to grasslands. We would therefore encourage the BLM to make an effort to reestablish the sagebrush range. Further, there is substantial evidence that the sage grouse have not been adversely affected during critical periods in other locations which are subjected to extensive human activity. Such an excessive boundary is indefensible and potentially burdensome to operators who might wish to explore near these areas, and we recommend a reduction in the restricted areas to no more than a 500 foot radius.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

  
Alice I. Frell  
Public Lands Director

AIF:cw

## Response to Letter 24

24.2 See Response to Comment 12.1

## Comment Letter 25



NORMAN H. BANGERTER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF UTAH  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
SALT LAKE CITY  
84114

July 29, 1985

Mr. Dennis Oaks  
Salt Lake District Office  
2370 South 2300 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84119

Dear Mr. Oaks:

The Resource Development Coordinating Committee has reviewed the Draft Box Elder Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. The recommendations of that Committee, as provided in the following attachment, serve as the position of the state of Utah on this document.

The state is well aware that resource management plans represent years of effort on the part of the BLM to understand the nature of the resources it manages. Such a data base is essential in order to appreciate the capability of the land and wisely balance its future productivity against demands of the various resource users. The attached comments are provided to assist the BLM in accurately representing that complex resource base and to suggest some changes in resource allocation.

Given the changes proposed in the attached comments, the state can support the BLM's preferred Alternative 2. The major shortcoming of Alternative 2 is the inadequate treatment of riparian habitat and management in the document. The issue needs to be explored in much greater depth and with greater specificity. Other changes to Alternative 2 include a need to provide additional protection in an ORV area during hunting season.

We hope that the state's specific comments will be useful. The state is supportive of the resource management plan process and is hopeful that its participation in the process will further thoughtful land planning and management.

Sincerely,

  
Norman H. Bangarter  
Governor

NHB/rs  
enc.

## Response to Letter 25

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## Comment Letter 25

Page one of Attachment

### Specific Comments of the State of Utah

#### A. SUMMARY

##### Page 3, Environmental Consequences, Lands

- 25.1 Changes in land ownership can lead to significant changes in environmental integrity, depending on changes in land use and management. Environmental consequences are quite possible as a result of any of the alternatives.

##### Page 3, Range Resources

- 25.2 Range resources, in reality, include both livestock forage and wildlife habitat. In the RMP format they are considered separately: livestock under range resources and wildlife habitat as a separate category. It is suggested that you combine both under one general title--Range Resources--with sections labeled livestock forage and wildlife habitat.

##### Page 4, Wildlife Habitat, Paragraph 2

- 25.3 Early spring grazing does not improve sage grouse nesting or brood habitat. Undisturbed grass and forb cover is critical through at least June 15 on these areas. Therefore, Alternative 2 or 3 would be preferred for sage grouse.

#### B. CHAPTER I

##### Page 10, Issue 2: Vegetation Management

- 25.4 In the "needed decisions" section add: "How can the increasing demand for wildlife be met?" This is a legitimate concern in light of significant shifts in hunter pressure to public lands in west Box Elder County.

- 25.5 Also, beyond asking how crucial habitats should be managed, ask how crucial wildlife habitat should be managed to maintain or improve existing conditions.

##### Page 11, Issue 4: Off-Road Vehicle Use, Paragraph 1

- 25.6 ORV use also has an effect on nesting raptors, especially when ORV use is concentrated near pinyon juniper and cliff faces.

#### C. CHAPTER II

##### Page 17, Paragraph Four

- 25.7 It would be helpful for the Ecological Condition to be summarized and published in the appendix.

##### Page 17, Features Common to All Alternatives

- 25.8 Management of abandoned mine hazards is an aspect of every alternative. The

## Response to Letter 25

- 25.1 See response to Comment 4.1.

- 25.2 The statement "Range resources. . . include both livestock forage and wildlife habitat." is correct. However, BLM has traditionally maintained these resources as individual programs, which has carried forward into the draft RMP. Although these resources are maintained as separate programs, there is considerable overlap and coordination for overall multiple-resource management of the vegetative resource. The portion of the Draft RMP/EIS to which you refer has not been reprinted in the Proposed Plan and Final EIS. However, your suggestion will be considered for future documents.

- 25.3 This paragraph has been rewritten to reflect your comments. See Revisions and Corrections for page 4.

- 25.4 BLM manages the habitat on public lands, and the State manages the animal populations and the public use of the wildlife. BLM is concerned with how to increase or improve habitat conditions which could support additional wildlife to be regulated by the State. Therefore, it is BLM's opinion that the listed "Needed Decisions" for forage allocations, livestock season-of-use, land treatments, range and water development, crucial habitat management, and wildlife reintroductions meet the needs of how to increase or improve the available habitat.

- 25.5 BLM agrees with this comment. The sentence has been rewritten to clarify this point. See Revisions and Corrections for page 10.

- 25.6 BLM agrees with this comment. The change has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 11.

- 25.7 Appendix 11 in the draft RMP is a summary of ecological condition by seral stage.

- 25.8 BLM agrees that hazardous areas could be made less accessible by closing areas to ORV use. However, the cost and time involved in enforcement of such designations is prohibitive. Sealing shafts, posting warning signs, and fencing hazards are all more viable for accident prevention and allowing various land uses to occur in the vicinity of such hazards.

## Comment Letter 25

Page Two of Attachment

25.8 various alternatives will impact the degree to which abandoned mines are a hazard, depending on how they deal with ORV or vegetation management. ORV policies and vegetation management plans can indirectly affect the exposure of the public to abandoned mine hazards by regulating vehicle access to areas that may have abandoned mines or by controlling livestock and wildlife populations (and thus numbers of ranch workers and hunters) in these areas. Using ORV policies to control public exposure to mine hazards is not the most effective means to this end; however, BLM should be aware of the relationship.

Page 20, Water, Paragraph 2

25.9 This section needs to be expanded to include a discussion of management of riparian areas. For example, what is the basis for assessing the condition of riparian zones.

Page 21, Table 2-1

25.10 All allotments within the maintain (M) category have critical wildlife habitats which require special management needs, i.e., winter ranges and riparian areas. Lynn and Yost pastures are listed in the (M) category but have previously been identified for livestock rangeland improvements.

Page 23, Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

25.11 More discussion is needed concerning the policy on improving stream banks and the loss of riparian vegetation on both 3A and 4 streams under each alternative.

Page 26, Alternative 2, Issue 2: Vegetation Management

25.12 Since there is insufficient data (pages 74 and 103) to make initial stocking decisions, it would seem best to maintain existing livestock use through the five year monitoring period at current use level.

25.13 Because of the large percentage of private property in the Grouse Creek area, a re-introduction of elk should be dependent on agreements with the affected private land owners.

Pages 27, 39, 49 and 54--Figures 2-1, 2-4, 2-7 and 2-9

25.14 The same graphics should be used for each figure. As it is presented, precise squares and/or sections are used to delineate mineral leasing categories for Alternatives 1 and 4; whereas, Alternatives 2 and 3 are represented by more general areal outlines. It is recommended that the more specific square graphic be used to allow for better evaluation of alternatives.

Page 37, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

25.15 There is insufficient data in this document to support designation of Red Butte Mountain as an ACEC. The state cannot support such a designation until it is supplied with a more complete rationale.

## Response to Letter 25

25.9 The idea of fencing riparian habitat as a management tool was discussed in the Draft RMP/EIS in Chapter 4 - Environmental Consequences under Alternative 3, Impacts on Range, Watershed and Wildlife on pages 108, 111, and 115, respectively. The proposed plan has no proposed decision for specific wildlife habitat improvement projects. Habitat improvements will be evaluated in detail in the various Habitat Management Plans (HMPs). HMPs are cooperatively prepared and signed by BLM and UDWR. Once signed, they will guide the wildlife habitat management within Box Elder County. Obviously, riparian/aquatic habitat management and improvement will be a major part of the HMPs because most riparian/aquatic habitats in Box Elder County are in fair to poor condition (see page 97 of the Draft RMP/EIS).

25.10 The category of an allotment does not preclude the planning and implementation of range improvement projects. However, "Maintain" and "Custodial" allotments generally are lower in priority for funding. If projects are implemented on these allotments, existing range improvement stipulations and mitigating measures identified in a project environmental assessment (EA) would be enforced. Wildlife requirements are a significant portion of any project EA and are reviewed and considered in project planning resulting in mitigating measures written to accommodate any special needs. BLM stipulations and specifications will be followed for all rangeland improvement projects.

25.11 The "Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat" section on page 23 of the Draft RMP presents actions that would occur regardless of which alternative is chosen.

Numerous laws, executive orders, regulations, policies and instruction memoranda govern BLM policy regarding riparian/aquatic habitat management. Air, Soils, and Water Proposed Decision 5 contains objectives for maintaining or improving riparian areas. Actual improvements will be implemented through HMPs, AMPs, or other actions.

25.12 Under the proposed plan, initial livestock use would remain as currently authorized. Monitoring studies will be conducted to assure that these levels are proper or determine if adjustments from active preference are needed.

25.13 BLM's proposed decision is to not agree to an elk reintroduction on public lands on the Grouse Creek Mountains. The preferred alternative in the Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed Decision 1 for wildlife identified criteria which UDWR would have to meet before BLM would agree to the reintroduction. These criteria include (1) the transplanted elk and the subsequent increase in animals would not displace any existing uses, and (2) agreements for the presence of elk and their subsequent increase could be reached between UDWR and the affected private landowners. These criteria cannot be met at this time.

25.14 The Proposed RMP contains a detailed map similar in form to that of the maps in Alternatives 1 and 4 of the of the Draft RMP (see Figure 3).

25.15 The Red Butte ACEC proposal has been dropped. See ACEC Proposed Decision 3 in the Proposed Plan.

## Comment Letter 25

Page Three of Attachment

### Page 38, Utility and Transportation Corridors

25.16

The RMP states that management will avoid riparian zones and live water. Yet a 100 yard buffer strip may not be sufficient for avoidance--especially in terms of impacts to wildlife, aesthetics, ORV access, etc. Instead of establishing a specific buffer of 100 yards, the route selection and alignment of utility and transportation corridors near riparian zones should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure an adequate avoidance margin in each instance.

### Page 45, Habitat Management Plans

We suggest the following priority list for HMPS:

25.17

1. Grouse Creek/Raft River
2. Sheep Trail/Curlew Junction
3. Goose Creek
4. Newfoundland
5. Hogup
6. Silver Island

### Page 46, Alternative 3

25.18

Alternative 3 is described as giving "priority to protection or enhancement of environmental values" while Alternative 4 (page 481) is described as giving "priority to resource use and commodity production". This implies Alternative 3 favors protectionism rather than conservation. Alternative 3 should read "This Alternative gives priority to enhancement of resource values." This way, differences between Alternative 3 and 4 are between degrees of resource use not use vs. nonuse. To be consistent, the wording of Alternative 2 (page 26) should also be changed to read "This Alternative would provide for a balance between resource development and conservation".

### Page 46, Alternative 3, Objective

25.19

Often improving wildlife habitat and watersheds require active management or development, much like improving ranges for livestock. For example, eroded gullies and head-cut stream channels require physical structures to facilitate improvement; or, riparian zones and spring heads need fencing to control damage by excessive livestock use.

### Page 47, Table 2-5

25.20

Why is fencing of springs or building of retention berms excluded under Alternative 4?

25.21

Each burn, spraying and/or chaining would have to be examined on the ground to determine if in fact no negative impacts would occur for sage grouse, huns, and chukars.

### Page 48, Alternative 4, Issue Two: Vegetation Management

25.22

It is understood that Alternative 4 favors livestock use; however, no AUMs for

## Response to Letter 25

25.16 Proposed Lands Decision 4 differs from the Preferred Alternative by requiring a 600 foot (200 yard) avoidance area for riparian zones instead of 100 yards. Where it is practical and necessary to increase the avoidance areas for riparian zones to protect resource values, BLM can do so.

25.17 The proposed priority list for HMPS and rationale are found in the Wildlife Program, Proposed Decision 7, in the Proposed Plan.

25.18 Your recommendation has been incorporated into the description of the alternatives. See Revisions and Corrections for pages 26 and 46.

25.19 This comment is interpreted as questioning the phrase "compatible with nondevelopment uses." Nondevelopment as used here does not mean that the values listed in the objectives do not require physical developments such as those the commentor identifies; often they do. Rather, the term as used here refers to resources whose values are based on their presence in the environment rather than their monetary worth as a harvestable, marketable commodity.

25.20 The objective of Alternative 4, as stated on page 48 of the Draft RMP, would not be served by fencing springs or building retention berms. Both actions would enhance wildlife, watershed, and aesthetics, but would be neutral or detrimental to activities that produce commodities. Wherever viable, however, these actions would be considered in multiple-use management under the Proposed Plan.

25.21 Specific on-the-ground improvements will be evaluated and implemented in conjunction with HMPS and AMPs. HMPS are cooperatively prepared and signed by the BLM and the UDWR. AMPs require BLM wildlife review and input. Environmental Assessments (EAs) are required for all activity plans and each improvement project if not included in an activity plan. The EA requires interdisciplinary input and on-the-ground reviews of the environmental consequences.

25.22 Based on the indications that currently authorized grazing levels are proper, increases in livestock use could necessitate decreases in wildlife use in order to maintain proper levels. Although some AUMs are not competitive, lack of more specific data required the analysis to assume that forage would be the same. In the case of the Pilot Mountains, the livestock increases necessitated eliminating elk use of forage. This, however, is not the proposed decision for grazing in the Pilot Mountain area.



## Comment Letter 25

Page Four of Attachment

elk on Pilot Mountain does not appear reasonable. All the AUMs presently being used by elk on Pilot Mountain could not be used and thus allocated to livestock.

- 25.23 Cutting antelope from 622 to 102 AUMs implies a herd reduction. Is this correct?

Page 59, Table 2-6

- 25.24 Range/habitat/watershed improvements should also be identified for Alternative 2. This data would facilitate comparison for R/H/W under each alternative--as is possible to do for AUMs given the data provided. While BLM's preference is to wait and formulate specific improvements as part of AMPs or HMPs, some figures should be provided to give the reviewer a general idea of the extent of work one could anticipate. The footnote could state these are subject to change based on plans.

- 25.25 Under each alternative, sheep AUMs have increased, even under Alternative 3. More explanation is needed for this increase.

Chapter Two, Figures

A general note on the organization of the figures in Chapter 2. Generally, the figures are not conveniently located. For purposes of comparison, it would be better to locate all figures at the end of the chapter.

D. CHAPTER III

Page 72, Paragraph 1

- 25.26 Abandoned mines occur within the Planning Area and can be quite hazardous to outdoor recreationists and others. These are implicitly alluded to in the discussion of locatable minerals, i.e. "Most of the other districts are presently inactive, or limited to casual exploration use". Although detailed discussion of abandoned mines is outside the scope of the EIS, BLM should be aware of their existence and implications for managing different land uses.

Page 74, Ecological Development, Trend and Forage Production

- 25.27 It would be helpful if this section had an explanation of succession and the relationship between wildlife and livestock vegetative needs (forage and cover) for each successional stage.

Page 79, Figure 3-1

- 25.28 Explanation of the difference between active and total preference and how this relates to existing AUMs would be very helpful.

Page 81, Soils

- 25.29 A table listing soil erosion conditions for each allotment is needed in the appendix.

## Response to Letter 25

For analysis purposes, Alternative 4 allows livestock AUMs to go up to full preference. In the case of the Lucin/Pilot Allotment, this was a livestock AUM increase of 814 from 2,641 to 3,455 AUMs. To accommodate this increase and still remain at the assumed proper use level, the 344 elk AUMs from public lands were eliminated so that an analysis of this change could be made.

The proposed decision in the Final RMP/EIS is to retain for elk the full 344 AUMs required from public lands on the Pilot Mountain Range.

- 25.23 The AUM decrease for pronghorn follows the same rationale discussed in Response 25.22 above for elk. This does imply a herd reduction, but was used for analysis purposes only. The proposed decision for pronghorn AUM allocation shows an increase of 964 AUMs from the present 622 up to 1,586.
- 25.24 The intent of the District was to portray in Alternatives 3 and 4 the kinds of improvements that may be made on the public lands so that an environmental analysis could be made of the effects of these actions. Actual improvements will be similar to those portrayed, but details of location, size, design, etc. are subject to more detailed activity planning. Given the fact that the need for improvements, as well as manpower and money to make them, fluctuates through time, it is impractical to project improvement needs far into the future.
- 25.25 Alternative 2 (active preference) is base data, the currently authorized level, for livestock numbers and AUMs. Alternative 1 shows actual use (five year average) and Alternative 4 reflects use at full preference or higher. Therefore, Alternative 3 is a decrease from currently authorized sheep forage use. The only proposed increase is shown in Alternative 4.
- 25.26 The figures were located closest to the resource or proposed action which was being addressed. The same organization is used in this document.
- 25.27 See Response to Comment 25.8.
- 25.28 The relationship between livestock and wildlife needs is complex and further analyzed in AMPs and HMPs; however, some generalizations could be made. For example, an Upland Stony Hills Range Site has the potential to produce between 1300 and 1700 pounds of air dried forage in a favorable year (excellent condition or climax seral stage). In this condition, 10 percent of the forage produced would be black sagebrush. In the same range site in a fair condition (middle seral stage), black sage would comprise up to 31 percent of the total forage produced. Therefore, to accommodate deer winter range the site should be in fair condition (middle seral stage) and to accommodate cattle the site should be in excellent condition (climax seral stage).
- 25.29 Active preference as identified in Alternative 2 is the total amount of AUMs authorized for use on the current grazing permit. Total preference would include suspended AUMs and is generally reflected in Alternative 4. Currently used (5-year average) AUMs are shown in Alternative 1. A number of allotments are currently grazed at active preference levels.

## Comment Letter 25

Page Five of Attachment

### Page 81, Watershed

- 25.30 A listing of the classification and ecological condition for each stream and stream section listed in Figure 3-2 would be helpful.

### Page 87, Paragraph 3

- 25.31 The Division of Wildlife Resources proposed a range of 250 to 750 elk not 200-500. The Division is interested in building a herd to 500. If no range or agricultural problems occur then the Division is in favor of going to 750 head. If there are conflicts the Division is prepared to stop at 250 head.

### Page 89, Figure 3-4, Pronghorn Antelope-Elk Habitat

- 25.32 It is recommended that the choice of print color used to distinguish the difference between yearlong pronghorn antelope and elk herd distribution be changed. The two grays appear essentially the same.

### Page 93, Waterfowl and Shorebirds

- 25.33 It should be noted that NW Box Elder County probably has the only remaining breeding individuals of the Lower Colorado River Valley Population of Greater Sandhill Cranes. While breeding has not been identified during the last five years, pairs have been identified. Attempts are being made to tag some of the young to verify they belong to the same population as Elko and southeastern Idaho and not Rocky Mountain Population. The LCRV population once occupied a much larger portion of western Utah.

### Page 93, Raptors

- 25.34 The species list should include screech owl, sharpshinned and Cooper's hawk, turkey vulture, roughlegged hawk, merlin and osprey.
- 25.35 Even though the black-tailed jackrabbit provides a significant amount of biomass for large diurnal and nocturnal raptors, it by no means reflects the extent of prey species used, specially during low jackrabbit populations. Other prey species include the Belding ground squirrel, cottontail rabbit, yellow-bellied marmot, kangaroo rat, wood rat, and numerous birds and reptiles.
- 25.36 A prey base of blacktailed jackrabbits and cottontail rabbits is extremely important to at least eight species of raptors and several terrestrial predators, including the kit fox and bobcat. This food base should be considered when habitat modifications convert vegetative types.
- 25.37 USFWS guidelines should be used to avoid disturbance to raptor nest sites. There is too much species variation to go with a standard 1/2 mile buffer zone.

### Page 94, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species

- 25.38 There is no reference to river otter in the document. During a recent survey (January, 1985), Nevada Fish and Game Department personnel reported extensive otter sign and two sightings in the Goose Creek area, only five miles from Utah. Based on the movement of both male and female otter, we are confident

## Response to Letter 25

- 25.30 The Soil Survey of Box Elder County - Western Part (SCS, 1983) provides detailed soil information, including soil erosion information. This data is in the form of an "order 3 survey" that ordered data into mapping units ranging from 50 acres to 1,000 acres or more. It would be very difficult and not cost-effective or practical to accurately aggregate and segregate data into units that coincide with grazing allotment boundaries. The soil erosion table has therefore not been added as an appendix to the proposed plan.
- 25.31 Stream classifications are included in Proposed Decision 5 of the Air, Soils, and Water Program. BLM has a vegetation inventory that includes the riparian vegetation of the 16 perennial streams on public land. This data was used to confirm that the riparian areas of these streams are in fair condition overall. However, there are areas within the riparian zones where conditions appear to be better than fair and areas where poorer conditions exist. As a result of this, Proposed Decision 5 set objectives to identify more specific ecological condition, evaluate potential, and identify improvement methods.
- 25.32 Because of many conflicts identified during the public review of the Draft RMP, BLM's proposed decision is to not agree to the reintroduction of elk on public lands in the Grouse Creek Mountains. (See Proposed Wildlife Decision 2 in the Proposed Plan.)
- 25.33 Figure 3-4 was not reproduced in this document. However, your suggestion is appreciated.
- 25.34 According to BLM records and species' habitat maps, the greater sandhill crane use areas are along the more lush valley bottoms that are all privately owned. Therefore, BLM has no management jurisdiction. However, this species and its potential habitat should be considered in the HMPs prepared for Western Box Elder County just in case it starts using BLM administered lands. The potential for developing habitat for this population should also be considered in the HMPs.
- 25.35 The change has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 93.
- 25.36 The addition has been made. See Revisions and Corrections for page 93.
- 25.37 BLM policy is to provide UDWR a year's advance notice and involve them in the environmental assessment (EA) review and comments. This EA should address all aspects of the environmental consequences of the treatment. It is BLM's and UDWR's responsibility to see that this has been done properly. The prey base for the various predatory species is one of the environmental factors that should be closely considered. The resulting decision should reflect these considerations in the project's size, design, location, or other stipulations, or in some cases, determine that the project should not be permitted.
- 25.38 BLM believes that for multiple use management, a 0.5-mile buffer zone is sufficient in most cases and for most species of nesting raptors. Comments from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species and Ecological Services sections did not mention that a 0.5-mile buffer zone was not sufficient for nesting raptors. There may be a few cases where 0.5 mile is not adequate. These exceptions can be specifically dealt with in the various HMPs, and decisions to extend the buffer zone can be made in those documents for the special cases.

## Comment Letter 25

Page Six of Attachment

25.39 that a viable population occurs within the Goose Creek drainage in Utah. Historical records show otter in the Raft River. This species deserves special management consideration because this may represent the only viable population in Utah. Riparian management practices, should attempt to meet otter habitat needs in Goose Creek and Raft River. Sharp tailed grouse should be listed as state sensitive species and also the pygmy cottontail.

25.40 We do not know of western blue birds in west Box Elder; however, we do have a declining population of mountain blue birds.

### Page 97, Riparian Habitats

25.41 The discussion here focuses on the importance of riparian areas. Yet in Box Elder County "most of the riparian/aquatic habitats are only in fair to poor condition". Given the significance of this resource, it is difficult to understand why more emphasis has not been placed on its improvement and maintenance. For example, fencing of riparian areas is only discussed under Alternative 3. Why not the other alternatives, as fencing is a good resource management tool in all cases.

25.42 With no riparian fencing in Alternatives 1, 2, and 4, wildlife habitat in riparian zones will continue to decline. Soil erosion and bank instability will continue, leading to sedimentation and changes in water quality.

25.43 In addition to a request that riparian fencing be a significant part of each alternative, the state requests that a table listing the ecological condition of all riparian/aquatic habitat on BLM lands be prepared. The table should list miles of stream habitat in each condition class.

### Page 99, Socioeconomics

25.44 The inclusion of the value of wildlife for recreation is useful and important. It gives a basis for comparing expenditures on wildlife habitat improvement vs. return on that investment. \$2.5 million is a good return for the limited investment made. It is recommended that determining the value of hunting exclusively on BLM lands be pursued, using a methodology that assumes hunting effort on public lands is in proportion to the extent of public land. The Salt Lake office of the DWR can provide estimates to make additional comparisons for fishing, waterfowl hunting and trapping.

25.45 Similar comparisons should be made for returns from livestock vs. rangeland improvement costs.

25.46 In order to offer a balanced perspective, in light of the lengthy livestock/ranching discussion, the discussion on the economic value of wildlife should be expanded. This would allow the public to compare the socioeconomics of both uses as they compare each alternative.

### E. CHAPTER IV

### Page 110, Impacts on Soils and Watershed

25.47 A discussion of the environmental consequences of not protecting

## Response to Letter 25

25.39 The Draft RMP/EIS has no references to the presence of river otter because BLM became aware of the discovery after the document was published. Also, it appears that Goose Creek is the only known location within the planning area, and it is nearly 100 percent privately owned.

The fact that the sharp-tailed grouse and the pygmy rabbit were State Sensitive species was also unknown to BLM. An addition has been made to reflect this new information. See Revisions and Corrections for page 97.

25.40 According to Richardson (1984b) the western bluebird is a State Sensitive-Declining species that is an accidental migrant to the planning area and breeds southward in the most southern counties of Utah.

Richardson (1984b) listed the mountain bluebird as a State Sensitive-Status Questioned species, and found it to be breeding along several streams and in the towns of Grouse Creek and Lynn.

25.41 The proposed plan defers specific habitat improvements such as riparian/aquatic habitat fencing to the various activity plans such as HMPs, and AMPs, and Multiple Use Management Plans (MUMPs) that will be prepared as a result of this planning phase. There are proposed decisions in this RMP for the development of a Goose Creek MUMP and a priority list of HMP areas. These documents will evaluate in detail the on-the-ground habitat improvements needed. Specific management actions for improving these conditions will be provided in the various activity plans prepared for areas that contain riparian/aquatic habitats.

Also see the Response to Comment 25.9.

25.42 See Response to Comments 25.9 and 25.41.

25.43 See Response to Comment 25.31.

25.44 BLM recognizes the need for detailed socioeconomic evaluation in project planning. A cost/benefit analysis is an important part of the planning of any improvement project. This process is accomplished during the HMP preparation or during the project planning phase. Funding priorities are given to those projects that show the highest benefit/cost ratio. The methodology suggested is good and will be used on a project-by-project basis during the activity plan preparation phase of planning. Time and manpower limitations will not allow this level of analysis in this document.

25.45 Similar comparisons are made for range improvement projects; benefit/cost is one of seven factors evaluated. These factors contribute to the selection of the priority of a project for funding.

25.46 The range socioeconomic section is presented in detail due to a court-mandated decision that sets standardized evaluation procedures and requires detailed range economic analysis in all Grazing EISs. BLM agrees that the level of wildlife socioeconomic evaluation could have been detailed, but time and manpower limitations would not allow developing this level of data. It will be possible to increase the level of detail in the activity plans, such as HMPs and AMPs.

25.47 The BLM agrees that the environmental consequences of not protecting riparian/aquatic habitats under Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 should have been addressed. The additions have been made. See Revisions and

## Comment Letter 25

### Page Seven of Attachment

riparian/aquatic habitat should be included here. This is one more example of the serious lack of consideration these important areas have received in the RMP. The state has recommended that riparian fencing be included as part of each alternative; in any case, the consequences of action or inaction as regards riparian/aquatic areas should be addressed in this section.

### Page 111, Alternative 3, Paragraph 7

- 25.48 "Wildlife habitat" should be added to the end of the second sentence.

### Page 114, Alternative 3, Paragraph 2

- 25.49 The discussion of AUMs for wildlife under Alternative 3 is confusing for several reasons. First, AUMs are projected to increase under Alternative 1 to a greater degree than Alternative 3 (8,096 AUMs vs. 2,136). One would assume that benefits to wildlife would be enhanced under Alternative 3 and not Alternative 1.

- 25.50 Second, no viable method has been provided to obtain the increased 2,136 AUMs for wildlife proposed under Alternative 3. Ida-Ute, Conner, and Naf allotments are listed as allotments where livestock grazing could be eliminated to meet wildlife AUMs. This is curious as current big game use is almost nonexistent on these allotments at the present time. In addition, the RMP states that even given the elimination of these allotments, in addition to reduction of livestock grazing on other allotments, enough forage to accommodate increased wildlife in all cases could not be provided. As it is presented in the RMP, the BLM is proposing a non-viable Alternative 3--as it would result in overgrazing. The state requests that the current proposal either be restated or reformulated to offer a viable alternative.

### Page 114, Alternative 3, Paragraph 5

- 25.51 Burning of 1,100 acres of big sagebrush would not necessarily improve sage grouse habitat. If the burn area is in nesting or winter habitats, it could have significant negative impacts.

### Page 115

- 25.52 Improved marsh habitat and creation of additional waterfowl habitat is of limited benefit unless livestock is also regulated in these areas.

### Page 115, Paragraph 5

- 25.53 What are "important" riparian areas with regard to fencing? What criteria were used to establish this priority?

### Page 117, Paragraph 2

- 25.54 If the harvest of 9,900 acres of pinyon/juniper on six allotments would improve deer winter range under Alternative 4, why improve only 4,500 acres under Alternative 3?

## Response to Letter 25

Corrections for pages 110 and 112.

The topic of whether or not BLM will fence riparian habitats is discussed in the Responses to Comments 25.9 and 25.41.

- 25.48 This section deals only with "Impacts on Soils and Watershed." The "Impacts on Wildlife Habitat" from fencing riparian/aquatic areas is discussed under that section, Alternative 3, on page 115 of the Draft RMP/EIS.

- 25.49 See the Responses to Comments 25.22 and 25.25.

Based upon the assumption that grazing at 10 percent or more below proper use would allow the vegetative resource to improve, it follows that habitat conditions would improve; the 8,096 AUMs not used by livestock could be available for wildlife use. However, these AUMs are allocated to livestock use and as such are only available at the discretion of the livestock operators. If the livestock operators decided to use their active preference, these AUMs would not be available and therefore cannot be counted upon for wildlife use.

Alternative 3 would reduce the livestock forage available in Alternative 2 by 2,135 AUMs to allow for the reintroduction of elk, bighorn sheep and pronghorn and the increase in pronghorn in areas where they are presently found. Therefore, the 8,046 AUMs mentioned as available for wildlife in Alternative 1 are from unused livestock AUMs, and the 2,136 AUMs shown in Alternative 3 are taken from livestock use.

- 25.50 The 2,136 AUM increase for wildlife in Alternative 3 would meet the needs of the proposed reintroduction of elk, bighorn sheep, and pronghorn and the increase of pronghorn identified under that alternative.

Eliminating livestock use on the Ida-Ute, Conner and Naf Allotments was proposed in Alternative 3. No AUMs from this livestock decrease have been reflected in big game use because these AUMs would be used by non-game species.

The lack of AUMs available to meet the needs of wildlife in Alternative 3 amounts to 446 AUMs on nine allotments. This AUM deficit involves pronghorn in most cases and is considered insignificant because livestock and pronghorn do not seriously compete. Therefore, BLM believes Alternative 3 was a viable alternative and properly treated the needs of wildlife.

- 25.51 These small scattered burns are proposed to improve sage grouse brood rearing habitat by creating small areas of increased forb and insect production and will be planned and evaluated in HMPs which are cooperatively prepared with the UDWR. If BLM and the UDWR cannot agree that the location, design and size of the burns would improve sage grouse habitat, then they will not be proposed or implemented. Significant negative impacts to sage grouse nesting and winter habitat will not be allowed, especially as a result of a wildlife habitat improvement project.

## Comment Letter 25

Page of Eight of Attachment

### Page 117. Impacts to Sage Grouse Use Areas, Paragraph 6

- 25.55 The RMP indicates that "wildlife could be seriously impacted during critical periods on...179,840 acres of sage grouse breeding complexes..." under Alternative 4. Impacts to sage grouse use areas are a violation of the MOU with the state BLM Director and BLM approved 1974 Guidelines for protection of sage grouse habitats.

### Page 118. Impacts on Recreation, Alternative 3

- 25.56 Unrestricted ORV use by hunters has impacted wildlife habitat and created significant erosion problems within Red Butte, Kimball Creek, Cycle Springs, Ingham, Dry Canyon and Pine Creek. Red Butte would benefit significantly with a total ORV closure during the hunting seasons. The state recommends that total ORV closure during hunting season in Red Butte be included as part of Alternative 2.

### Page 118. Alternative 4

- 25.57 By allowing ORV use into riparian habitat/aquatic areas, declining riparian habitat will continue to reduce the variety and abundance of all wildlife which utilize this vegetative type. Poor bank stability and increased soil erosion on overused riparian aquatic habitats will continue to reduce visual and recreational quality.

### Page 123. Paragraph 5

- 25.58 Grazing under Alternative 1,2 and 4 would not restore the productivity and vegetative component of existing riparian communities.

## Response to Letter 25

- 25.52 These marsh habitat improvements will be proposed and evaluated in HMPs and will not be implemented unless livestock grazing can be controlled.
- 25.53 The priority riparian/aquatic habitats for fencing are those with the highest potential to improve as a fishery or terrestrial wildlife habitat through fencing. Fencing these areas must be physically feasible and economical. BLM must administer enough of the stream to reasonably assume that protection would make a difference in the overall quality. Livestock grazing must be determined to be the limiting factor.
- 25.54 The 9,900 acres of pinyon/juniper harvest proposed in Alternative 4 were designed to increase the forest product use and improve the livestock range condition. If properly designed and located, a secondary benefit could be improved mule deer winter range conditions in the form of increased browse understory. The 4,500 acres of pinyon/juniper harvest proposed in Alternative 3 were designed to increase mule deer winter range conditions by increasing the browse understory. Increased forest product use and improved livestock range conditions are incidental benefits.
- 25.55 Alternative 4 favors resource uses and as such has only minimal acreages in mineral leasing Categories 2 (open with special stipulations) and 3 (no surface occupancy) (see Appendix 5 in the Draft RMP). This lack of protection is presented in Alternative 4 to show a range of alternatives as is required in an EIS. BLM's proposed decision is to close a 0.5-mile area around each lek to disturbing activities from March 15 through June 15.
- 25.56 See Response to Comment 16.1.
- Under the Proposed Plan, ORV use is proposed to be limited to existing roads on 7,630 acres on Red Butte Mountain. BLM would be very willing to work with UDWR in formulating motorized vehicle restriction areas on other public lands for the sage grouse and mule deer hunts.
- 25.57 Alternative 4 is presented to show a range of alternatives as is required in an RMP/EIS. See Response to Comment 2.2.
- The proposed recreation decision will provide protection for the Donner and Bettridge Creek drainages. Other riparian/aquatic habitats will not be officially closed in an ORV plan for the reasons discussed under the Response to Comment 16.1. The various HMPs will fully evaluate riparian/aquatic habitat protection needs and will make plans and decisions to implement needed protection. These activity plans may decide fencing and/or a road closure is necessary to protect the riparian/aquatic habitat.
- 25.58 BLM agrees that fencing riparian/aquatic habitats is virtually the only way to assure these areas are not overgrazed. Alternative 3 analyzes fencing some areas, whereas Alternatives 1, 2 and 4 do not. Therefore, the BLM agrees with the comment, but the intent of paragraph 5 on page 123 is to depict the overall grazing picture and not to look at specific areas. For example, reducing the grazing level in an allotment by 50 percent should improve the overall vegetative condition in time, but probably would not change the level of use or improve the condition of a riparian/aquatic area within that allotment. Air, Soils, and Water Proposed Decision 5 sets forth BLM's objectives for management of riparian areas in the planning area.

## ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

### Comment 1: Con Maxfield

"While limitations for vehicle access may be desirable in some areas and in certain seasons, we recommend an exemption from such restrictions for any ranch- or livestock-related ingress."

### Response 1

Exceptions may be made to vehicle limitations. These allow legitimate necessary travel across limited areas by any land users qualifying for such exceptions. Your grazing permit could be modified to allow vehicle use, subject to stipulations that would meet the protection objectives for the area.

### Comment 2: Con Maxfield

"We understand range management objectives in altering seasons of use but point out that in some cases changes may result in a reduction of the total number of livestock that can be maintained on a year-round basis or result in added feed-import costs.

"This would be the situation on our ranch. And we oppose detrimental changes in season-of-use."

### Response 2

The proposed Box Elder RMP suggests some adjustment in spring season-of-use for some allotments. However, the RMP does not recommend a reduction in livestock AUMs due to season-of-use adjustment. Most proposed season-of-use adjustments when finalized with affected permittees will parallel and enhance current practices and will culminate in an improved vegetative resource. There are no immediate season-of-use changes proposed for the allotments grazed by your livestock in the Proposed RMP. However, some modification of season-of-use may occur during implementation of an Allotment Management Plan. These changes would consider the needs of the resource and the permittee.

### Comment 3: Con Maxfield

"Red Butte Area of Critical Environmental Concern: We fail to see how this area merits this classification and feel that more intensive, expensive management of this area is not warranted."

### Response 3

Upon further analysis the Red Butte Area has been determined not to qualify for designation as an ACEC. (See ACEC proposed decision 3.)

### Comment 4: Con Maxfield

"Manipulation of Livestock and Wildlife AUMs: Wildlife depredation of private lands is already a serious concern in our operation. An increase in AUMs for wildlife and a reduction in livestock AUMs would have a double detrimental economic impact on our ranch. We feel that any introduction of elk would be particularly costly, and the detrimental economic impact on our ranch. We feel that any introduction of elk would be particularly costly, and the detrimental economic impact would far outweigh any incremental public good.

### Response 4

The proposed RMP does not identify reductions in livestock AUMs. Proposed Decision 1 for wildlife identifies the criteria which must be met before BLM will agree to a reintroduction. The criteria address the concerns mentioned in the comment. Proposed Decision 2 states that BLM would not agree to an elk reintroduction in the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountain Ranges.

### Comment 5: Con Maxfield

"Well, we've pointed out that on pages 74 and 75 of the study, a classification of vegetation in the lands involved. And we point out that only 83,000 acres involve riparian habitat, conifer/aspen, and mountain shrub which, to some naturalists are the most critical vegetation to the type of wildlife that have been referred to in the study.

"That seems to be a mighty small portion to be making such a big deal out of additional wildlife."

### Response 5

It is true that a small percentage of the total habitat on the Grouse Creek Mountain Range is vegetative types considered highly preferred by wildlife. However, dispersion of these smaller, preferred areas enhances the larger, less desirable habitats such as sagebrush and pinyon-juniper, making the whole area good wildlife habitat. It is the diversity and quality of habitat that is important and not just the quantity involved.

## ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

### Comment 6: Con Maxfield:

"Now, I would like to point out that taking the old Transcontinental Railroad, the old Central Pacific Railroad bed -- if we take all of the lands south of there, which require very little management on the part of the Federal government, if you eliminate those lands, most of the study seems to be based on the lands north and west of that old roadbed. It would appear that there is only about 400,000 acres of BLM-administered lands in the northwest corner of Box Elder County, which would be north of the old Central Pacific Railroad bed and west of that railroad bed.

"That would constitute only about one-third of the total acreage involved there. Any intense management on the part of the Federal government on those 400,000 acres is bound to impact on the approximately 800,000 acres of private lands or otherwise-owned lands there. And we feel that because of the peculiar nature of the layout of the land -- and the study refers to the fact that the lands are interspersed among private lands -- that any intensive management of these minority lands to encourage recreational use at the expense of livestock production is a serious encroachment on the private property rights of the private property owners, almost constituting an unconstitutional taking of private lands without compensation."

### Comment 7: Gary Rose

"I don't really believe that people outside of the livestock industry realize how essential, at times, these roads are to an operation. When you have a sick cow or something of this nature, you have to get to it. And sometimes it would involve taking salt by horse an awfully long ways if we were unable to use the roads by vehicle."

### Comment 8: Gary Rose

"Also, another area of concern -- and I voiced this same concern in Park Valley -- that of the elk. And Mr. Maxfield mentioned this. I think that the topography of the land indicates that those elk in the deep snow in the mountains would definitely come down into that whole area. It is surrounded by ranches. At the base of each one of those hills, that is where the valleys are situated. And they are all privately owned."

### Comment 9: Gary Rose

"I feel very strongly that we have a deer problem at times. We have had to do some deer fencing, which takes them out of the stockyards in spots. But still in all, we have to have what forage we have for the livestock that we have."

### Response 6

BLM will continue to manage the public lands for multiple uses as required by FLPMA. Your interest in the use of public land for livestock production at the expense of recreation opportunities and equal interest by other public land users for their uses at the expense of livestock form the basis for the need for multiple use management.

### Response 7

Under the Proposed RMP, needed roads would be built as time and funding can be appropriated. BLM recognizes that key roads into the allotments are critical to the operation of livestock operations. Permittees would always be allowed to utilize the road system for ongoing operations; however, in some areas there may be excess roads which result in unnecessary resource damage and harrassment of livestock. On a case-by-case basis, roads within the allotments will be analyzed and those identified as excess will be taken out of the system and put to rest.

### Response 8

See Response 4.

### Response 9

BLM realizes that during a hard winter all available hay is needed to sustain the local livestock. It is also recognized that during these hard times, deer tend to congregate around available forage such as private haystacks. Haystack fencing can be obtained from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Regular and special hunts can be used to help reduce the deer depredation problem. Not wanting to compound this problem is one reason BLM's proposed decision is not to agree to the elk reintroduction on public lands on the Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountains.

## ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

### Comment 10: Gary Rose

"Maybe it isn't of any concern to the Bureau of Land Management, but the livestock industry in Box Elder County and throughout the state is in a very critical stage. It is economically depressed, probably as bad as it was in the last depression. And I think any encroachment upon the status quo is going to tip the balance.

"As was testified at the Bureau of Land Management meetings on the fee increase, any fee increase would be detrimental to the livestock industry in Box Elder County.

### Comment 11: Alan Kunzler

"I guess first of all I'd like to start out with what I have problems in the appendages of the book where they have a chain of no areas bigger than 50 acres in one block. I don't really feel that that is economically feasible. And where it permits and you have areas that are treatable -- say, for instance, that BLM had one section and you had an area that, say, 100 acres in that section that is feasible to treat -- I fail to see why you can't treat the whole 100 acres if it happens to be in one block."

### Comment 12: Alan Kunzler

"My other problem in the appendages is with where it states that no blade or crawler blade could be used to doze or remove brush for a fence line. I don't feel that going out there and hand digging it -- well, that's about the only other alternative you have other than using a piece of equipment on it -- I think the cost is the main factor there versus, you know, being able to remove it with a dozer blade."

### Comment 13: Alan Kunzler

"And I also feel that "reintroduction" is incorrect. I don't -- I'd like to see a copy of -- however they can prove that there was elk at one time that lived and stayed on that Raft River Mountain.

### Comment 14: Alan Kunzler

"The other one is the riparian fences that they have outlined for Fisher Creek and down in Rock Creek. I don't really -- knowing them canyons very well, I don't see any feasible way to really, for the dollars spent -- that we could fence them, maintain them, and still maintain the draft of the cattle. But, anyway, I really don't feel that that is a very good idea.

### Response 10

It has never been the intention of the BLM to adversely impact the livestock industry. BLM recognizes the critical position of the industry in Box Elder County and is structuring its RMP to maintain or enhance the natural resources utilized by the livestock people in the planning area.

### Response 11

BLM will treat the maximum area within a proposed treatment area while providing for other resource concerns. In some cases this area will be more than 50 acres. The resulting treatment will be more pleasing visually, provide for other concerns such as wildlife cover and runways, and maximize the production of forage for livestock. It has been suggested by researchers that small block treatment actually results in higher production (pounds of forage per acre) while reducing watershed damage and maximizing moisture retention.

### Response 12

The vegetative types found on the majority of public lands in the county generally do not physically impede fence construction. In woodland sites it has been found that there are few trees growing that actually interfere with construction. Therefore, it is cheaper to remove these trees by hand than to utilize a dozer. As was pointed out in Comment Number 10, the livestock industry is suffering from a severe economic depression, utilizing a bulldozer to clear unnecessary fence line would be very expensive to whoever is responsible for construction of that fence. In addition, the unnecessary resource damage and visual impact is unacceptable under a multiple use management concept.

### Response 13

UDWR has informed BLM that they have literature sources that state the Raft River Mountain range was historic elk habitat. Mike Welch of the Northern Region of UDWR was to send copies of this confirmation to Dee Kunzler to inform the local community of this fact.

### Response 14

The Proposed RMP does not include specific habitat improvements. The Grouse Creek/Raft River Mountains HMP will evaluate in detail the need for, and the feasibility of, fencing the public land riparian/stream habitat in the Fisher Creek Allotment. If this evaluation determines a need to fence these streams, livestock movement and water access will be designed into the fencing projects. The maintenance of these fences, if built, will be BLM's responsibility.



# ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

## Comment 15: Alan Kunzler

"I do have some problems with Alternative Four, one being the legal access. It's stated in there that they want legal access to improve management. I think it would cause a management problem by the gates being left open -- that's why they was locked at one time, because we couldn't keep gates -- rock was being stolen. And we had, at times -- several times -- during chicken hunting and before, with motorcycles going up there in the fall of the year stirring up cattle. And we had a lot of problem with them coming down and leaving the gates open when you was right at the bottom.

"Now, I think, ourselves, where we border it on about one and a half sides, it would really cause us a problem on our private land. Where it's -- again, I'm talking in the Fisher Creek area. Where they have that under control, we do not have the problem with people traveling through our own private land where we border them because they do control it."

## Comment 16: Alan Kunzler

"The next problem I have is with the disposal of some of the lands. For example, Section 21, you have a half section there in Township 13-13. And that section has been planted into crested wheat, which is probably as highly productive as any BLM section or ground that I know of out in that country. And Section 24, which is below Bald Knoll, is, I would say, comparable ground. We haven't been able to reseed it, burn it and reseed it, because of the DWR -- it says that it is very crucial deer winter range. And I don't see how you can -- how the BLM or whoever -- can go in and buy there -- They're talking of buying, in Alternative Four, highly productive land. And it looks like to me, right there, we are selling highly productive land. And I don't know -- and I would like to know -- where they are thinking that we could acquire this, you know, more highly productive land.

"I would rather see the BLM hold onto the land that they have and try to block it as much as possible, you know, whenever it is permitted."

## Comment 17: Dean Stephens

"I refer to seasons-of-use that they, under almost all of the alternatives, propose some changes in seasons-of-use. Our particular allotment is the Lucin/Pilot Allotment and the Leppe Allotment. We have always run in the Leppe in the winter. Now, winter to me, is January to March.

"And in the proposed changes under Alternative Two in the Lucin/Pilot Allotment, they ask for a change. And we have also run in that allotment in winter.

"But in this discussion there is no mention of any winter grazing. The season-of-use seems to run from June 1 to December 31. And there is nothing in this area for winter grazing. But that is a traditional winter allotment. It always has been."

## Response 15

Access to Fisher Creek has been dropped from the proposed RMP.

## Response 16

The two sections in question will be retained in public ownership. BLM will continue to seek to reduce the fragmented ownership pattern in Box Elder County. This will be done within the guidelines of the Proposed RMP.

## Response 17

You are correct in your statement that both the Lucin/Pilot and the Leppe Allotments have been used in the winter. The Leppe is a winter allotment and the Lucin/Pilot Allotment is also used at other times. There has not been a proposal to eliminate winter use in either allotment. Winter use in these allotments was mistakenly not included in the draft RMP. We apologize for this error and have included the winter use in the proposed plan.

## ORAL COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING

### Comment 18: Dean Stephens

"Now, I'm interested in converting sheep AUMs to cattle AUMs and have been for a number of years. And I have not been able to get anything done along those lines. But since you now have a system, I think it would be very good to let people know what the system is and how you apply for that thing to get it done."

### Response 18

Conversion of class of livestock is accomplished under BLM regulations and District policy on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that an application be made in writing to the District staff.

### Comment 19: Dean Stephens

"I am also concerned about a statement, a plan -- the area of Critical Environmental Concern. Our particular allotment, the Lucin/Pilot is listed as a potential area of critical environmental concern. And I would like to be more clearly informed as to what that would be in regard to the effect of us as grazers on our national lands."

### Response 19

The proposed ACEC on Donner and Bettridge Creeks in the Pilot Mountains will not significantly affect livestock use in the immediate area. In the worst case, the ACEC plan might require elimination of grazing on approximately 100 acres along and adjacent to the two streams. Access by livestock to water would be allowed at all points below the areas of occurrence of the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. In the probable case, the exclosure on Bettridge Creek will be maintained, and the lightly vegetated stream reach that extends perhaps 200 yards above the water box on Donner Creek could be fenced. These exclosures would result in the removal of livestock use on about 10 to 15 acres.

### Comment 20: Dean Stephens

"There is another statement in the paper that says that an area in Section 28, which is on Morrison -- you call it Donner Creek -- that there will be no mineral development allowed in that particular section.

"I traded that section to the BLM. And in the trade, we retained the mineral rights to that section. So the fact that you may own the ground, the mineral rights are still ours. And I find it difficult to believe that you could preclude our using those mineral rights -- unless you'd like to buy them."

### Response 20

Section 28 was not included in the acreage proposed for mineral withdrawal because the mineral rights are yours. Section 28 is also available for fluid mineral recovery subject to special stipulations where so designated and to no surface occupancy by equipment where so designated.

### Comment 21: Dean Stephens

"There is another inaccuracy in this particular report. It says that the Bettridge Creek area is water that is owned by Wendover City. That's incorrect. That water is owned by ourselves. The interest of Wendover City ends at Donner Creek.

### Response 21

This correction has been made. (See revisions and corrections for page 82.)

# FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROPOSED PLAN

This section describes the significant environmental consequences that would result from implementing the proposed Box Elder Resource Management Plan (RMP). The analysis assumptions stated on page 103 of the Draft RMP/EIS apply to the following analysis.

### Impacts On Lands

No impacts to lands (realty) actions would result from implementing the Proposed Plan.

### Impacts on Minerals

#### Locatable Minerals

The existing withdrawal of 6,840 acres of public water reserves would continue. Because these tracts are small and highly scattered, no significant impacts to locatable minerals would result. An additional 381 acres is proposed for withdrawal. The 381 acres include the portions of Bettridge and Donner Creeks on public land on the east side of the Pilot Mountains. The closest mining area to these creeks is the Lucin District, located 12 miles to the north, in Mississippian limestone and surrounding rocks. Thousands of feet of other rocks overlie economically minable limestone within the proposed withdrawal area. Because no mining is likely to occur in the alluvial placers on the east side of the Pilot Range, the proposed withdrawal would not significantly affect locatable mineral development.

Any large scale exploration or mining operation may require additional analysis and special operating stipulations. Locatable mineral activities within proposed ACECs would require detailed mining plans.

#### Fluid Minerals

About 79 percent (800,732 acres) of the Federal mineral estate would be open (Category 1) for fluid mineral leasing. There would be no adverse impacts to exploration or development since there would be no special restrictions on these lands.

Category 2 areas, totalling 213,726 acres, would be open with special stipulations as appropriate. No activities would be allowed during certain seasons on 125,440 acres to

protect wildlife values. Of this acreage, 83,840 acres of crucial winter range for mule deer would be closed from December 1 through April 15 each year. Another 17,920 acres would be closed from March 1 through July 15 in order to protect crucial raptor nesting sites. The remaining 23,680 acres would be closed from March 15 through June 15 to protect sage grouse breeding complexes. These lands would be available for fluid minerals activities through the remainder of the year, although subject to any other special stipulations that may be required to protect resource values.

Approximately 149,715 acres, including some of the above acreage, would be subject to special stipulations including those necessary to protect riparian habitat and aquatic areas, watersheds, and VRM Class II and III areas. These stipulations could affect the locations and costs of fluid mineral development.

No surface occupancy (Category 3) would be permitted on 3,861 acres. This would require slant drilling from adjacent lands to recover any mineral reserve that may be present. In some cases where slant drilling would be impractical, the development of reserves could be precluded.

### Impacts on Range Resources

Disposal or transfer of 8,317 acres would eliminate administrative problems related to management of isolated tracts of lands. Sale or exchange would eliminate 50 AUMs in the Curlew Junction Allotment (tract 32). The Yost Iso-tract (tracts 34, 35) and the Naf (tract 40) Allotments would be retained as public land if disposal to the Forest Service is not implemented. In either case, there would not be a reduction or elimination of AUMs. The Ida Ute Allotment (tract 39), if not transferred to the Forest Service, would be disposed of through sale; therefore, a loss of 6 AUMs would result. Disposal of these tracts could have some economic impact on the permittees; however, due to the number of AUMs involved, this impact would be insignificant.

Eight miles of proposed physical access would facilitate ongoing range management practices such as monitoring, construction of range improvement projects, and use supervision. New access would also provide corridors for livestock movement and aid in maintenance of facilities such as fences and water troughs. This alternative should result in better distribution of livestock because permittees would have better access to other parts of the allotments, which

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

would ease the tasks of salting and herding livestock. Increased distribution of livestock should result in better dispersed utilization of forage, which would ease grazing impacts in traditional grazing areas. Diminishing the impacts on these areas and opening new grazing areas should increase vegetation over the long term.

Livestock grazing would initially remain at active preference levels. Temporary increases would be permitted where additional forage has been determined to be available. Seral stage would remain static on all allotments because grazing use would be at proper levels.

Twenty-five allotments, including 2 spring, 5 spring/fall, 8 summer, 7 winter, 2 spring/fall/summer and 1 spring/summer/fall/winter, would have some readjustment of season-of-use. All of the proposed changes in season-of-use would result in either maintained or improved condition of the vegetative resource by reducing or eliminating livestock use during the critical growing period. In addition, season-of-use adjustments would facilitate the implementation of grazing systems, thereby aiding in maintaining or improving the vegetative resource. Implementation of the proposed season-of-use changes would impact permittees economically in the short term due to having to find alternative feed sources for displaced livestock. In the long term, the resulting range condition should have positive economic impacts, especially during drier years, by insuring that forage would be available.

Impacts of off-road vehicles to range resources are insignificant or highly localized at the present time. However, in the future, increased ORV use on 999,634 acres which will remain open could result in a short- and long-term decrease in vegetation, both in the immediately impacted sites and other areas surrounding the sites because of erosion. Removing either soil-holding species or desirable forage species would result in a significant invasion of undesirable plants such as halogeton, cheatgrass and rabbitbrush. This would diminish site potential, increase the probability of fire (cheatgrass), and increase livestock poisoning (halogeton).

Vehicle use during times of adverse weather could result in deterioration of public access roads from erosion damage. Unrestricted cross-country ORV use could result in harassment of

livestock during the critical calving and lambing periods and in the winter when livestock are subject to environmental stress. Vandalism to facilities and maintenance costs for both BLM and affected livestock operators could increase.

Limiting ORV use on 12,160 acres could reduce or eliminate livestock harassment during calving and lambing periods, and could reduce erosion, vegetation loss, and invasion of undesirable forage species in the short and long term.

### Impacts on Air Quality

Impacts to air quality would occur from particulate matter and visible smoke resulting from such things as rangeland improvements, road construction, mineral development, and off-road vehicle use. Because the impacts would be of short duration, they would not be significant.

### Impacts on Soils and Watershed

Land exchanges which block public lands would enhance watershed management by increasing the feasibility of improvement projects.

In some areas, ORVs, minerals exploration and development, natural erosion, and livestock grazing seasons would have significant effects on soils and vegetation. When these effects are adverse they result in lost or altered vegetation and soil loss through erosion. Erosion on disturbed areas would be manifested as rills, gullies, and increased sedimentation.

Over time, ORVs increase the number of vehicle trails by traveling repeatedly over formerly roadless areas. This results in soil compaction and destruction of vegetation in wheel paths. In steeper areas, erosion would occur and ruts would develop within a short period of time. Watershed values decline as surface runoff, sedimentation and soil loss increase. Acreage affected cannot be determined, but the impact could be significant.

On 999,634 acres that would be open to ORV use, soils and vegetation would not be protected from possible damage. Watershed values would benefit from limiting ORV use on 12,160 acres. The benefiting areas would be: Red Butte Mountain, 7,630 acres; Devil's Playground, 3,300 acres; Donner Creek, 640 acres; Bettridge Creek, 320 acres; and although of very limited watershed significance, the old

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Central Pacific Railroad Grade, 250 acres.

Numerous small public water reserves would continue to be protected by the withdrawal of 6,840 acres. Another 381 acres on Donner and Bettridge Creeks would be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry and also placed in Category 3 for fluid mineral leasing to protect against possible damage to watersheds.

On 213,726 Category 2 acres, special stipulations would be applied to fluid mineral leases that would help protect watershed value. Slopes of 30 percent or greater would not be disturbed. No activities would be permitted within 600 feet of riparian/aquatic areas. This would protect about 3,535 acres of these areas from disturbance.

Erosion on about 1,330 acres of critical and severe erosion areas on the Lucin-Pilot, White Lakes, South Kelton, Rosebud, and Dove Creek Allotments would continue. Over time, the amount of acreage involved would gradually increase. Rangeland, watershed, and wildlife values would continue to gradually decline as soil and vegetation would be removed by erosion. However, rangeland, watershed, and wildlife habitat values are relatively low in those areas and are of local significance only.

No impacts would occur to watersheds from grazing levels since they are at the rangeland's capacity. Season-of-use adjustments on 25 allotments would reduce grazing during the critical growth period allowing the condition of grass and forb species to improve. This would benefit affected watersheds by increasing soil stability and water retention capability over the long term.

### Impacts on Wildlife

Of the total 41 tracts (8,317 acres) proposed for disposal, approximately 7,659 acres on 37 tracts could be disposed into private ownership and therefore considered lost as public wildlife habitat. However, the habitat values on these tracts would be of less value than the other public lands. Wildlife habitat would not be lost on the tracts proposed for transfer to other agencies. Exchanging lands under the criteria identified in the proposed plan would maintain or increase wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat values are expected to be maintained on the public lands identified for retention.

Adopting the rights-of-way avoidance areas identified in the proposed plan would protect most wildlife habitat values. The 0.5 mile buffer

around sage grouse strutting grounds may allow powerline poles to be used as raptor hunting perches in view of the strutting ground on flat terrain. However, the exceptions to the avoidance area criteria would allow this situation to be mitigated. The proposed new access in the Black Rock/Baker Hills/Dove Creek Allotments area should not significantly impact wildlife or wildlife habitat in the short or long term.

Minerals exploration and development would have a negative impact on wildlife habitat on approximately 10,000 acres in the Lion Mountain and Kimball Creek areas and within the U&I and Kilgore Allotments.

The proposed withdrawal of 381 acres from locatable mineral entry on Donner and Bettridge Creeks would provide protection for critical habitat of the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout because mineral exploration and development would be excluded.

As a result of the proposed fluid mineral leasing categories, impacts to wildlife habitat would be reduced on 83,840 acres of crucial mule deer winter range, 17,920 acres of raptor nest sites, and 23,680 acres of sage grouse breeding complexes. The condition of important wildlife habitats would be protected on 3,535 acres of riparian/aquatic habitat and 381 acres of critical habitat for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout along Donner and Bettridge Creeks. In addition, fluid mineral leasing restrictions on 84,511 acres of VRM Class II and III areas and 149,715 acres of crucial watershed areas will also help protect wildlife habitat values.

The proposed decision to establish a 0.5-mile radius around sage grouse breeding complexes leaves 156,000 acres of these complexes without direct protection from fluid mineral exploration. However, on-the-ground alignment and timing should mitigate any adverse effects.

The proposed decision to allow temporary forage increases for livestock would not reduce the authorized forage for wildlife.

The season-of-use changes in the proposed plan should result in improved wildlife habitat conditions in the long term.

The restrictions in the proposed plan for activities disturbing to wildlife will maintain wildlife habitat integrity and allow for increased wildlife reproduction and survival.

Under the proposed plan, some wildlife harassment and habitat disturbance could

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

occur on the following areas which would remain open to ORV use: 20,300 acres of mule deer crucial winter range, 2,000 acres of raptor nest sites, 5,100 acres of sage grouse breeding complexes, and 240 acres of riparian/aquatic areas. Emergency ORV closures would be implemented if a situation becomes serious. The habitat disturbance and wildlife harassment would continue at a moderate, but not serious, rate. The Donner and Bettridge Creek areas would receive adequate protection for the Federally-threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and its critical habitat. The ORV limitations on 10,930 acres of VRM Class II areas would improve habitat conditions for numerous species.

The proposed decision to establish the Donner and Bettridge Creek drainages as an ACEC will facilitate proper management of these areas to protect and enhance the watersheds and critical habitat of the Federally-threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. This ACEC designation and required management plan will benefit all wildlife within this area.

### Impacts on Recreation

Recreationists would be allowed to travel without ORV restrictions on 999,634 acres of public land designated as open for ORV use. All roads, trails, and roadless areas would be open for all uses including those such as hunting, fishing, sight-seeing, cross country travel, motorcycling, snowmobiling, hill-climbing, rock hounding, and visiting cultural or historical sites.

On 12,160 acres, ORV use would be limited to existing roads and trails. This limitation would reduce accessibility to unroaded areas for recreation uses and preclude or limit recreation activities in areas away from roads and trails. Areas where this limitation would occur are Red Butte Mountain (7,630 acres) and Devil's Playground (3,300 acres). Recreation at Donner Creek (640 acres), Bettridge Creek (320 acres), and the old Central Pacific Railroad Grade (250 acres) would not be significantly impacted because of the small acreages involved.

### Impacts on Visual Resources

Rights-of-way for facilities that would be visible or that would leave significant visual evidence of their presence must avoid, where possible, Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II and III areas (84,511 acres). This restriction

would minimize degradation of the scenic qualities of these areas. Where avoidance would not be possible, stipulations would be applied to reduce the impacts through rehabilitation of disturbed surface, strategic placement, color requirements, and design of surface features. In spite of the stipulations, however, some adverse impacts to scenic quality could occur.

ORV use would be limited to existing roads and trails on all VRM Class II areas. This limitation would protect 10,930 acres from reduced scenic quality that could result from the development of new trails caused by off-road travel. VRM Class III (73,581 acres) would be open to unlimited ORV travel. Conditions in these areas do not presently warrant ORV limitations, but the potential for surface scars from new trails would continue.

All Class IV lands would also be open to ORV use. Impacts to visual resources as a result of ORV activity on these lands would not be significant.

Fluid minerals exploration and development on VRM Class II and III areas would be required to locate and design activities in a way to meet the VRM criteria. This would preclude any significant adverse impacts to scenic values. Activities on VRM Class IV areas would not significantly affect visual resources.

### Impacts on Cultural Resources

On 999,634 acres designated as open to ORV use, prehistoric and historic cultural sites would be accessible. Some sites could be disturbed or destroyed, either by unwitting disturbance or willful tampering and theft.

On 12,160 acres, ORV use would be limited to existing roads and trails or designated roads. This would reduce accessibility to cultural sites on Red Butte Mountain (7,630 acres), Devil's Playground (3,300 acres), Donner Creek (640 acres), Bettridge Creek (320 acres) and the Old Central Pacific Railroad Grade (250 acres). Reduced accessibility would result in less intentional and unintentional disturbance of cultural sites.

### Impacts on Forest Resources

No impacts would result.

# FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

## Impacts on Fire Management

Limiting ORV use on 12,160 acres would reduce the potential for man-caused fire by restricting vehicles from cross-country travel, thus reducing recreation related fires and eliminating vehicular ignition sources. As a result, watershed would be protected and fire suppression costs in these areas would be reduced. The hazard of man-caused fires would continue on 999,634 acres open to ORV use.

## Impacts on Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Withdrawal from locatable mineral entry and designation as Category 3 for fluid mineral leasing would protect a threatened fish species and water quality on 381 acres in the proposed Donner Creek-Bettridge Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Limited ORV use designation on 980 acres in the proposed ACEC would improve protection of the same values.

Category 3 fluid mineral designation on 1,240 acres along the proposed old Central Pacific Railroad Grade ACEC would protect the grade from associated damages. On 250 acres along the grade, ORV use would be designated as limited. Motorized vehicles would be required to remain on existing roads and trails. This would enhance protection of historic values on and adjacent to the proposed ACEC.

The proposed railroad grade ACEC crosses Box Elder County in a general east-west direction. Future rights-of-way requiring north-south routing would need to cross the grade and would visually intrude on the ACEC if requiring above ground features.

## Impacts on Socioeconomics

Ranch capital value would not change because active livestock preference would remain the same. Ranch capital value would increase on allotments where temporary AUM increases are made permanent. Cattle operations would increase their actual use by an average of 4 percent above current levels. Activating this increase would result in increased costs, or income losses of \$94 to the small dependency cow-yearling operation, \$45 to the small dependency cow-calf operation, and \$63 to the medium dependency cow-calf operation.

The small dependency ewe-lamb operation would experience an average increase in

income of \$27,182 as a result of a 75 percent increase in use above current levels. Although all sheep operations are figured into this average, only those operations which have taken substantial non-use would experience a significant increase in income.

## Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Land disposals would cause the permanent loss of 8,317 acres from public ownership unless the tract is transferred to another Federal agency. Any resource values on these lands except minerals would be lost.

Minerals, if present, would not be recovered on 7,221 acres withdrawn from locatable mineral entry. No surface occupancy for fluid mineral leasing would be allowed on 3,861 acres. This could increase mineral recovery costs or completely preclude development. Special stipulations required for fluid mineral development on 213,726 Category 2 acres could affect the locations and costs of fluid mineral development.

Adjustment of season-of-use for livestock grazing on 25 allotments could result in some operators having to feed livestock longer from other sources until later spring turnout dates are reached.

Erosion would continue on 1,330 acres in five areas of critical or severe erosion.

Treatments and improvements that would be needed to meet planning objectives could cause scenic disturbance, accelerated erosion, vegetation changes, lower wildlife habitat quality, and reduced forage for livestock and wildlife. In most cases these impacts would be mitigated or diminish over time.

On 999,634 acres that would be open to ORV use, soils and vegetation would not be protected from possible damage. Some cultural or historical sites would be damaged or destroyed by willful or unwitting disturbances by ORV users. Recreation opportunities would be reduced on 12,160 acres where motorized vehicles would be required to remain on existing roads and trails.

## Irreversible And Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Disposal of public lands would result in an irreversible and irretrievable loss of disposed lands and their resources, except for mineral values.

## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Any minerals extracted would be irreversibly and irretrievably lost. Soil lost through ground disturbing activities would be irretrievable and, in most cases, irreversible within the span of several decades.

In areas of land treatments, land and vegetation would be committed for the lives of the projects. Vegetation production lost on treated areas prior to rehabilitation would be irretrievable. Where surface activities permanently remove vegetation, vegetation production would be irreversibly and irretrievably lost.

The loss of wildlife habitat through land disposal or other actions that would permanently alter the character of the land would be an irreversible and irretrievable loss. Lost habitat for game animals would permanently remove those areas from hunting opportunities.

### Short-Term Use Versus Long-Term Productivity

Disposal of 8,317 acres of public land would increase resource management efficiency in the short and long term. Resources found on these tracts would be lost from public use; however, most of these resources are currently unavailable because of the location and limited access to the tracts.

Eight miles of new physical access in three locations would facilitate resource management opportunities in the short and long term.

Season-of-use changes for livestock grazing could impact permittees in the short term due to the necessity of finding alternative feed sources for displaced livestock. In the long term, the resulting improved range condition would insure that forage would be available.

Designation of lands in Categories 2 or 3 for fluid mineral leasing would reduce or eliminate both wildlife disturbance and soil erosion in the short and long term. In areas designated open to fluid mineral leasing, these impacts would continue. In areas open to locatable mineral development, periodic wildlife disturbance and soil erosion could occur in the short and long term.

Designating public lands open for ORV use would result in a loss of vegetation, increased fires, and disturbances of wildlife and livestock in the short and long term. Impacts would be reduced or eliminated in areas designated as

limited for ORV use.

Where treatments and improvements would be used to improve livestock, wildlife, or watershed related vegetative conditions, short-term adverse impacts would occur to soils, scenic quality, forage, and habitat. In the long term, adverse impacts would cease and beneficial effects would occur.

## REVISIONS AND CORRECTIONS

This section contains the revisions and corrections made to the Draft RMP/EIS. All page numbers listed below refer to the Draft document and are in numerical order.

Page 1, Alternative 1, third paragraph—change 16,356 AUMs for wildlife to 16,536 AUMs for wildlife.

Page 3, Lands, first paragraph—change to:

No environmental consequences would result to lands actions as a result of any of the alternatives.

Page 4, Wildlife Habitat, second paragraph—change first two sentences to:

Continued early spring livestock grazing would increase the sagebrush composition and reduce the grass and forb composition. This vegetative change would improve mule deer and sage grouse wintering habitat under Alternatives 1 and 4, while sage grouse nesting and brooding habitat and habitat for other species would decline. Under Alternatives 2 and 3, a reduction of spring grazing would decrease wintering habitat conditions for sage grouse and mule deer; other species' habitat, including sage grouse nesting and brooding habitat, would improve.

Page 10, Issue 2: Vegetation Management, under *Needed Decisions* —change fifth decision to:

How should crucial wildlife habitat be managed to maintain or improve the existing habitat conditions?

Page 11, Issue 4: Off-Road Vehicle Use, first paragraph, second sentence—change to:

Wildlife such as mule deer, sage grouse, and nesting raptors are some times harassed by ORV users during critical periods.

Page 13, Table 1-1: Change *Golden Spike National Monument* to *Golden Spike Historic Site*.



## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Page 26, Alternative 2, Objective—change first sentence to read:

This alternative provides a balance between resource development and resource protection.

Page 26, Issue 2: Vegetation Management—change third sentence to:

For deer and elk, current levels are what UDWR desires for management of existing herds. Big game use would also include a reintroduction of 60 sheep in the Pilot Mountains (same as Alternative 1).

Page 46, Alternative 3: Objective—change first sentence to:

This alternative gives priority to protection or enhancement of resource values.

Page 72, Caption for photograph—change to:

*Abandoned Tungsten Mine Near Rabbit Springs*

Page 73, last paragraph, last sentence—Delete *wildlife*.

Page 74, Poisonous Plants and Noxious Weeds—change *milevetch* to *milkvetch*.

Page 74, second column, first paragraph—change first sentence to:

Noxious weed control is the responsibility of the State, Box Elder County, and the private landowners.

Page 75, Table 3-1, Desert Shrub/Saltbush—delete *Salina wildrye* and insert *Salmon wildrye/Elymus ambiguous var. salmonis*.

Page 82, fourth paragraph—delete second sentence.

Page 88, second paragraph, second sentence—change to:

Domestic sheep on the Pilot, Newfoundland, and Raft River Mountain ranges could transmit diseases to the nonimmune native sheep.

Page 93, Raptors, first paragraph, third sentence—change to:

Species known to use the area are the bald and golden eagles, rough-legged hawk, marsh hawk, Cooper's hawk, sharp-skinned hawk, prairie falcon, merlin, American kestrel, osprey, turkey vulture, great horned owl, barn owl, burrowing owl, long-eared owl, short-eared owl, and screech owl.

Page 93, Raptors, first paragraph—add the following sentence:

Other important prey species include the Belling ground squirrel, cottontail rabbit, yellow-bellied marmot, kangaroo rat, wood rat, and numerous birds and reptiles.

Page 97, (Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species, continued)—insert new paragraph after third paragraph:

The river otter occurs in Goose Creek (also historically found in the Raft River); this otter along with the sharp-tailed grouse and the pygmy rabbit are considered State sensitive species.

Page 98, Cultural Resources, second paragraph last sentence—change *introduction* of pinyon pine to *advent* of pinyon pine.

Page 99, second paragraph—change *Promontory Point* to *Promontory Summit*.

Page 103, Analysis Assumptions—add:

7. Implementation of an alternative or combination of alternatives will not adversely impact any endangered, threatened, or sensitive species since this protection is mandated by laws and regulations and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis for each activity undertaken.

Page 110, Alternative 1, insert after third paragraph:

The lack of fencing or adequate protection of riparian/aquatic habitats would allow continued or increased soil erosion, bank instability, sedimentation and a decrease in water quality. The riparian/aquatic habitat conditions would remain at fair or poor or may even decrease in some situations.

Page 110, Alternative 2, insert after third paragraph:

The lack of fencing or adequate protection of riparian/aquatic habitats would result in the same effects as described under Alternative 1.

Page 112, Alternative 4, third paragraph—change *allotaments* to *allotments*.

Page 112, Alternative 4, insert after fifth paragraph:

The lack of fencing or adequate protection of riparian/aquatic habitats would result in the same effects as described under Alternative 1.

Page 121, Table 4-2, Alternative 2, change column to:

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-\$63

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF WITHDRAWAL U-52338

T. 12N., R. 8W.,  
Sec. 26, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 27, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 11N., R. 9W.,  
Sec. 5, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 13N., R. 10W.,  
Sec. 5, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 12, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 14N., R. 10W.,  
Sec. 32, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 33, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 9N., R. 11W.,  
Sec. 26, Lot 1

T. 10N., R. 11W.,  
Sec. 8, Lot 3

T. 12N., R. 12W.,  
Sec. 10, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 5N., R. 13W.,  
Sec. 5, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 6N., R. 13W.,  
Sec. 30, Lot 6

T. 13N., R. 14W.,  
Sec. 14, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 8N., R. 15W.,  
Sec. 7, Lot 3

T. 11N., R. 15W.,  
Sec. 14, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 22, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 28, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 12N., R. 15W.,  
Sec. 22, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 30, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 14N., R. 15W.,  
Sec. 22, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 23, Lot 3

- T. 10N., R. 16W.,  
 Sec. 6, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 12, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 13, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 24, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 11N., R. 16W.,  
 Sec. 18, Lots 1, 2, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 30, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 12N., R. 16W.,  
 Sec. 32, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 33, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 14N., R. 16W.,  
 Sec. 7, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 17, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 9N., R. 17W.,  
 Sec. 13, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 11N., R. 17W.,  
 Sec. 1, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 3, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 6, Lots 4, 6  
 Sec. 10, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 13, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 14, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 18, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 23, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 24, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 31, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 32, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 33, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 12N., R. 17W.,  
 Sec. 9, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 10, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 11, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 31, Lot 4  
 Sec. 36, Lot 1, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 13N., R. 17W.,  
 Sec. 22, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 23, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 27, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 33, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 34, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 35, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 14N., R. 17W.,  
 Sec. 6, Lots 16 and 20

- T. 8N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 3,  $SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 4,  $SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 6,  $SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 24,  $NE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $N\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 11N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 13,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SE\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $N\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  
 $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 12N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 5,  $NW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 18,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $E\frac{1}{2}SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 13N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 29,  $W\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 31,  $NW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 14N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 5,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 6,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 8,  $NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 9,  $NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 18,  $NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $E\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 19,  $S\frac{1}{2}NE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 30,  $NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 31,  $NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 15N., R. 18W.,  
 Sec. 33,  $SE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 34,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 35, Lot 1,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 4N., R. 19W.,  
 Sec. 10,  $NE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 5N., R. 19W.,  
 Sec. 4,  $NW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 10,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 14,  $W\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 26,  $NW\frac{1}{4}NW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $NW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$
- T. 6N., R. 19W.,  
 Sec. 4, Lot 3  
 Sec. 10,  $SW\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 14,  $NE\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $SW\frac{1}{4}SW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 26,  $S\frac{1}{2}NW\frac{1}{4}$   
 Sec. 34,  $NE\frac{1}{4}NE\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $NE\frac{1}{4}SE\frac{1}{4}$

T. 11N., R. 19W.,  
Sec. 1, Lot 1  
Sec. 4, Lot 1  
Sec. 9, Lot 1  
Sec. 26, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 12N., R. 19W.,  
Sec. 33, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 13N., R. 19W.,  
Sec. 1, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 12, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 13, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 22, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$

T. 14N., R. 19W.,  
Sec. 13, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
Sec. 24, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$

APPENDIX 2  
PROPOSED INITIAL LIVESTOCK FORAGE USE BY ALLOTMENT

L I V E S T O C K   U S E   ( A U M S )					Total
Number	Allotment	Cattle	Sheep	Domestic Horses	Livestock Use
5034	Goose Creek	2,140	0	25	2,165
5035	Vipont	44	0	0	44
5036	Junction Creek	589	0	0	589
5037	Raft River	212	0	0	212
5038	Yost Pastures	1,206	0	0	1,206
5039	Janeys Spring	438	0	0	438
5040	Hardesty Creek	1,713	0	0	1,713
5041	Grouse Creek	3,432	0	84	3,516
5042	Dry Canyon	1,161	0	17	1,178
5043	Lynn	629	0	0	629
5044	Kimball Creek	1,179	0	22	1,201
5045	Death Creek	424	0	0	424
5046	Buckskin	515	0	12	527
5047	Red Butte	937	0	0	937
5048	Ingham	802	0	0	802
5049	Muddy Creek	501	0	0	501
5050	Ingham Pass	80	0	0	80
5051	Dairy Valley	442	0	0	442
5052	Cycle Springs	399	0	0	399
5053	Rosebud	729	0	0	729
5054	Kilgore	268	0	30	298
5055	White Lakes	0	1,500	0	1,500
5056	Pine Creek	211	0	5	216
5057	Owl Springs	1,682	0	16	1,698
5058	U & I	914	0	0	914
5059	Watercress	390	0	0	390
5060	Yost Iso Tract	44	0	0	44
5062	Lucin/Pilot	871	1,770	0	2,641
5063	Leppe	160	1,120	0	1,280
5064	Warm Springs	440	0	0	440
5065	Newfoundland	0	4,593	0	4,493
5066	Basin L & L	1,064	922	0	1,986
5067	Young Brothers	0	1,660	0	1,660
5068	Ward	0	400	0	400
5070	Mann	0	448	0	448
5071	Matlin	0	480	0	480
5072	Red Dome	0	384	0	384
5073	Selmon/Goring	0	924	0	924
5074	Terrace	0	369	0	369
5075	Pritchett Block	0	0	0	0
5076	Dove Creek	1,025	0	104	1,129
5077	Peplin	0	283	0	283
5078	Baker Hills	316	0	0	316
5079	Black Rock	159	0	0	159
5080	Rosette	60	0	0	60
5081	Hirschi	25	0	0	0
5082	Shaw Spring	75	0	0	75
5083	South Kelton	220	0	0	220
5084	Fisher Creek	410	0	0	410
5085	Ten Mile	33	0	0	33
5086	North Kelton	220	0	0	220
5087	Curlew Junction	50	0	0	50
5088	Snowville	2,628	686	0	3,314
5090	Salt Wells	401	0	0	401
5091	Rozelle Flat	336	0	0	336
5092	Golden Spike	131	0	0	131
5093	Conner	132	0	0	132
5094	Naf	7	0	0	7
	Ida-Ute	6	0	0	6
Total		29,850	15,539	315	45,704



APPENDIX 3  
PROPOSED BIG GAME FORAGE USE

ALLOTMENT		BIG GAME AUMs				Total Big Game Use
Number	Name	Deer	Elk	Pronghorn	Bighorn Sheep	
5034	Goose Creek	360	0	0	0	360
5035	Vipont	105	0	0	0	105
5036	Junction Creek	341	0	0	0	341
5037	Raft River	0	0	0	0	0
5038	Yost Pasture	892	0	0	0	892
5039	Janey's Spring	691	0	0	0	691
5040	Hardesty Creek	424	0	0	0	424
5041	Grouse Creek	2,317	0	0	0	2,317
5042	Dry Canyon	670	0	0	0	670
5043	Lynn	776	0	0	0	776
5044	Kimball Creek	776	0	0	0	776
5045	Death Creek	147	0	0	0	147
5046	Buckskin	59	0	0	0	59
5047	Red Butte	430	0	0	0	430
5048	Ingham	1,353	0	0	0	1,353
5049	Muddy Creek	181	0	0	0	181
5050	Ingham	214	0	0	0	214
5051	Dairy Valley	414	0	0	0	414
5052	Cycle Springs	493	0	0	0	493
5053	Rosebud	732	0	0	0	732
5054	Kilgore	480	0	0	0	480
5055	White Lakes	859	0	0	0	859
5056	Pine Creek	943	0	0	0	943
5057	Owl Springs	0	0	192	0	192
5058	U & I	238	0	124	0	362
5059	Watercress	0	0	52	0	52
5060	Yost Isotract Tracts	0	0	0	0	0
5062	Lucin/Pilot	379	344	256	64	1,043
5063	Leppe	0	0	0	0	0
5064	Warm Springs	516	0	0	0	516
5065	Newfoundland	0	0	0	184 <sup>1</sup>	184 <sup>1</sup>
5066	Basin L & L	0	0	36	0	36
5067	Young Brothers	0	0	28	0	28
5068	Ward	0	0	28	0	28
5070	Mann	0	0	28	0	28
5071	Matlin	0	0	84	0	84
5072	Red Dome	0	0	36	0	36
5073	Selman/Goring	0	0	28	0	28
5074	Terrace	0	0	44	0	44
5075	Pritchett Block	0	0	0	0	0
5076	Dove Creek	224	0	36	0	260
5077	Peplin	0	0	52	0	52
5078	Baker Hills	0	0	52	0	52
5079	Black Rock	0	0	36	0	36
5080	Rosette	172	0	0	0	172
5081	Hirschi	96	0	0	0	96
5082	Shaw Springs	14	0	0	0	14
5083	South Kelton	0	0	78	0	78
5084	Fisher Creek	109	0	0	0	109
5085	Ten Mile	75	0	0	0	75
5086	North Kelton	90	0	70	0	160
5087	Curlew Junction	0	0	0	0	0
5088	Snowville	0	0	326	0	326
5090	Salt Wells	0	0	0	0	0
5091	Rogelle Flats	0	0	0	0	0
5092	Golden Spike	0	0	0	0	0
5093	Conner	0	0	0	0	0
5094	Ida-Ute	0	0	0	0	0
5095	Naf	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		15,570	344	1,586	248	17,748

<sup>1</sup> 184 AUMs of bighorn sheep use is dependent upon the permittee voluntarily relinquishing his domestic sheep permit or converting the permit to cattle use. (See Proposed Wildlife Decision 3.)

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